

the chronicle

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Taxpayers' £2.2m bill for legal battles

Taxpayers have shelled out more than £2.2 million for Walsall Council to take legal advice over the past three years. The authority has already spent more than £1m this financial year on costly legal fees.

Council bosses said the ever-growing compensation culture was part of the problem. Motorists whose cars have been damaged by potholes or pedestrians who have tripped on pavements are typical claims lodged with the authority. Employment tribunals also drive up legal costs.

Councils across the West Midlands have seen soaring legal costs as they become caught up in expensive battles both in and out of court.

The Black Country councils, excluding Walsall, and councils in Staffordshire and Wyre Forest, face a combined legal bill so far of £2m since April last year.

Walsall Council bosses said they "robustly" defend claims when they are advised there is a sound legal reason for doing so.

In 2008/09, Walsall Council spent £265,777 on legal costs, rising to £881,743 in 2009/10. So far this financial year, the figure stands at £1,053,677.

Finance chief Councillor Chris Towle, said: "A significant proportion of the external legal fees incurred are paid in relation to defending claims brought against the council."

"Where the council is advised there are sound legal reasons for defending any claims, it will do so robustly. Residents will be aware of the growth of the compensation culture in this country therefore we don't encourage this."

"This ensures that public money is not diverted from the front line services."

He said action had been taken to ensure that such money is kept within the council's budget to deliver vital services. He added: "Residents should understand it is not efficient to retain in-house specialists on every specific area of law that may arise and thus there is a need to engage external solicitors at market rates." The council has worked alongside other authorities to make sure it gets best value for legal work.

Fishy tale of one that got away

A copper fish forming part of a £40,000 public project in Brownhills has mysteriously disappeared for the second time from its pride of place on the end of a fishing line.

The fish previously went missing from the sculpture over the Wyrley and Essington Canal in Walsall Wood last year. It was discovered it had fallen off on to the towpath, and picked up by community-spirited 71-year-old Barbara Grant, who lives in nearby Beechtree Road.

But this time there is no hint as to where it could have gone as the fisherman itself is still intact, so it seems unlikely to be an act of vandalism. The steel and brass figures of 25 Walsall Wood people were put up on the green opposite Brooklands Road, along with the fisherman by the canal, in February last year. They are part of the same project which saw a 55ft replica of a pithead, believed to be the biggest mining tribute in the world, installed on the land off Lichfield Road, Walsall Wood.

The art project was funded by Walsall Council and carried out by Cradley Heath-born artist Luke Perry's firm, Industrial Heritage Stronghold.

Education firm is now facing tough questions

SERCO WILL SHED 100 IN SHAKE-UP

The private company with a multi-million pound contract to run Walsall's education is to lose 100 jobs.

Walsall Children's Services, part of Serco Group, has undergone a government inspection that revealed it is only meeting its minimum requirements.

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Thieves take drain lids again

Metal thieves have once again plundered drain covers from streets in Walsall - leaving taxpayers with a bill of £5,000.

Eight covers were stolen from Moorside Gardens in Reedswood. Two were also taken from nearby Lane-side Gardens. Residents have condemned the crimes.

They said people could have fallen down the open drains and been hurt.

Moorside Gardens resident Norman Smith said: "I think it is terrible, absolutely disgraceful. They were taken in the night and people could have fallen down the holes."

The 59-year-old added the drain covers that were secured with hinges had been left by the thieves as they prevented them from making a quick getaway.

Temporary safety lids and cones are now covering the holes in the two streets.

It costs taxpayers £500 to replace each manhole cover. Walsall Council said it was working on permanent replacement covers.

The organisation, which employs around 400 in Walsall in non-teaching jobs, is now facing tough questions into its ability to turn around educational standards in the borough.

Posts are to be axed due to the renegotiation of the contract between Serco and Walsall Council, which is looking to reduce the cost by £7.5m over three years.

An Ofsted report which looked into the service, based at the Education Development Centre, in Pelsall Road, Rushall, branded it "adequate", saying standards needed to be raised in the borough's schools.

Awarded

It comes just days after Walsall came 151st out of 171 local authorities for GCSEs and A-levels. The organisation was awarded a £345m deal to run education services in the borough for 12 years in July 2008.

But Walsall Council leader Councillor Mike Bird, said he was not satisfied with its performance.

"If they cannot improve themselves, how can they improve education in Walsall?" said Councillor Bird.

"The standard of education is still far, far short of what we want it to be. The issue needs to be taken into account more strongly."

Graham Talbot, interim managing director, said a reduction in workforce was "likely" but could not confirm numbers. "Discussions will be held with the council and staff," he said.

Asda be artistic to win



Duty Manager Jason McLanachun, back, centre right with staff from Asda, George Street, Walsall.

Asda means to the community. Charles Page, general manager for Asda, Walsall, said: "We're keen to play a role in supporting the community wherever we can and wanted Asda's part of the hoarding to truly reflect what our store means to the local area."

Applications must be submitted by Monday February 7, to Asda Walsall Design Competition, c/o Ashley McKeown, Euro RSCG PR, 52 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6JX.

As part of the country's largest areas of organised graffiti, the supermarket will pick the design which they feel best reflects what

£2m library will be built say chiefs

A £2 million library will still be built in Walsall, council chiefs have vowed, despite the announcement that six others will close in the borough.

Plans for a new library and children's centre in Bentley have been in the pipeline for more than four years but the recession and the downturn in the property market are being blamed for the delay.

Money to fund the project is due to come from sale of land in Bentley and this cash has been ring-fenced.

The state of the current property market means it is not the right time to sell. Regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew, said: "We remain committed to providing a new facility in Bentley."

"Funding for the building was going to be ring-fenced from the sale of the land but obviously, with the downturn of the economy, the property market has taken a hammering."

He added: "But I still want a new venue for Bentley and discussions with officers to make this happen are still continuing."

People living in Bentley have been consulted over the new library, set for Queen Elizabeth Avenue, and have even selected a design.

Bentley's former library, along with a children's centre, was closed in 2006 and has since been demolished. Councillor Bill Madeley, chairman of Bentley Project Reference Group, said he had been given assurances money from the sale of land in Bentley would be safeguarded.

He said: "The main message is we want a new library in Bentley and we don't want a cheaper one either."

"We want the one that the people agreed with."

On Tuesday, it was revealed six of the borough's 16 libraries are due to close under cost cutting measures.

Leisure chiefs have ordered a review of all the currently libraries and will reveal the locations of those facing the axe after that.

It has been hinted that libraries could move into community centres, leisure centres and even churches.

Better - page 4

Delight over green success

Campaigners have spoken of their delight after they were successful in securing Walsall's first village green.

The Friends of Chucky Corner Green applied to Walsall Council for a parcel of land between Walslow Road and Charlotte Street to be recognised as a village green in order to apply for grants for a revamp.

The group had to prove the land had been used for recreation for at least 20 years, and it was reported last week that councillors had granted the application. The campaigners are now putting together another application for lottery funding.

Group Secretary Alan McDevitt, said: "Obviously we are delighted at the decision and we would like to thank the council officers in the planning department and legal services who gave us a great deal of help during the application process."

"Particular thanks should go to the council green spaces team, who gave us invaluable advice and support."

"As far as we know, this is the first time Walsall MBC have given approval for a village green."

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Doomed market's deadline

No commercial operators are interested in taking over and reviving doomed Darlston Market. The borough's regeneration chief said he had been in talks with private operators but they had come to nothing.

Walsall Council's cabinet approved closure of the King Street market by March 31 in a bid to save £24,000 a year.

Councillor Adrian Andrews, regeneration boss, said he was disappointed, but the economic climate was forcing such measures.

"We have had talks with commercial operators, but at this time they are not interested."

"For the past few years, Darlston Market has been behind the shops and not in the high street. I move was the death knell for the market and I will be investigating that."

"Darlston is struggling and we need to regenerate it. We don't want it fall off the edge of the planet, particularly being stuck between Bilston and Wednesbury."

Two Darlston traders selling toiletries and clothes will relocate to Walsall or Willenhall, and two mobile units – a butcher and a burger van – may continue with street licences in agreement with landowners Asda.

A council report says market income fell 12 per cent on last year and is only expected to bring in £7,000 by the end of the year.

Council leader Mike Bird said: "It's sad, but I hope people will be able to accommodate it and we can see a market come back to Darlston in the future."

Car permits double to £40

Residents' parking permits in Walsall will double in price after council chiefs agreed to the increase.

The price will rise from £20 to £40 after being approved by the council's cabinet.

There will also be a cost of £50 for any additional permits taken out by a household from April 1.

There are five parking zones in the borough which aim to make it easier for residents to park outside their homes.

The permits are not compulsory, but make parking more convenient in areas close to Walsall town centre, Banks's Stadium and Manor Hospital.

It was revealed that £70,000 is spent on operating residents' parking schemes but they generate only £7,000.

Council leader Mike Bird said: "Yes, it's £40 a year, but the convenience factor has to be paid for."

Helpers needed

Volunteers are needed to help with collections to raise money for the Alzheimer's Society at supermarkets across Walsall. First collections are at Morrisons, in Anchor Road, Aldridge, on February 4 and 5. Cash raised is used to support and care for people with dementia and their families.

For information, email emma.dowler@alzheimers.org.uk or call 01384 295601.

Routes to success

Walsall delivery group Nightfreight has won new work with the country's biggest storage equipment supplier.

The three-and-a-half-year deal with Rapid Racking is said to be worth seven figures to Nightfreight, based at Crestwood House, Birches Rise, Willenhall.

It will see the storage solutions supplier entrust all its onward deliveries to Nightfreight. It previously ran its own fleet of vehicles.

Nightfreight will manage the complete outbound delivery of Rapid Racking's full product range, including pallet racking, shelving and containers from its Gloucestershire site to customers nationwide.

The company will operate five vehicles from Kiskey, Southall, Willenhall and Pucklechurch.

Bad weather delays opening of hospice

Severe weather has delayed the completion of the £5.5 million Walsall Hospice. The first patients had been due to move into the new building this month but will now move in mid-March.

The cold snap and heavy snowfall in December delayed work on the long-awaited hospice, being built at the site of the former Goscote walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

No rise for families on council tax

Council tax in Walsall is to be frozen this year, bringing welcome relief to thousands of struggling families, the cabinet says.

Bosses at Walsall Council said they were "keeping money in people's pockets" with the decision, which has been made possible by a £2.71 million grant from the Government.

The Treasury announced last year it was making £650 million available nationwide to divide and distribute to local authorities which opted not to increase their council tax.

The cash is the equivalent of a 2.5 per cent increase.

It means the bill for the average Band D home in Walsall will remain at £1,531 for 2011-12.

Most houses in the borough, a total of 48,257, are in Band A and will see their council tax remain at £1,021.

Deputy council leader Councillor Adrian Andrew said: "We are freezing the council tax this year. We are keeping money in people's pockets. This is something that we should be proud of."

The freeze is set to be confirmed along with the final budget on February 24.

The council tax for Band B homes in Walsall will remain at £1,191, Band C £1,361, D £1,531, E £1,872, F £2,212, G £2,553 and H £3,063.

Walsall Council is currently trying to save £65m over the next three years and is facing job losses of more than 400.

The Tory-run authority has also lost £19.5m in government grants for the next two years and will see its overall budget slashed from £296m to £262m.

Park ranger is VIP guest

The Walsall branch of the RSPB was due to hold its first indoor meeting of the new year this week. Steve Hinton, ranger at Lickley Hills Country Park, Birmingham, was invited to be guest speaker at the meeting in St Mary's Primary School, Jesson Road, Walsall, on Wednesday, January 19.

Hospital, in Goscote Lane, Walsall.

Patients from Little Blowwich Day Hospice are still due to be the first to make the move.

Peter Mitchell, of NHS Walsall, said: "The project was affected by the severe weather which affected construction schemes across the country."

"Patients from Little Blowwich will be moving in mid-March now."

"We had always planned a phased move into the new building. The hospice is expected to be fully up and running by April."

Much of the scaffolding around the new building has now been taken down.

Nursing

Workers moved in to start laying the foundations at the end of last year.

The hospice will have 12 inpatient beds and a day hospice for 20 outpatients.

It will offer complementary therapy and services for bereavement and counselling, and there will be a dedicated dementia unit.

Nursing duties are to be carried out by staff from Lichfield's St Giles Hospice.

A campaign for a hospice in Walsall began more than two decades ago and a £1.5 million appeal has been launched to help pay for running costs and equipment in the first year.

Cheryl Bradburn, Walsall Hospice head of fundraising, said work to hit that target was going well.

At the last count, around £900,000 had been raised.

For the past two years, one of the hospice's main money-raising events has been the Starlight Walk, a five-mile night stroll around Walsall Arboretum.

To donate to the hospice appeal, visit the www.walsalhospice.co.uk website.

Sum effort by staff

Employees at a Black Country wholesaler have given a tired Darlston classroom a maths-themed makeover to help improve pupils' enthusiasm for numbers.

Staff from Blakemore wholesale cash and carry depots in Walsall, Wolverhampton and Birmingham joined forces to redecorate the classroom at Salisbury Primary School in Salisbury Street, Darlston. The

team worked for two days to paint the room and give it a maths theme.

Team leader Terry Webster said: "It's the first time all three Midlands-based cash and carries have worked together to complete a community project and it has been a real success."

"It has helped us to work a lot closely together and we will definitely be looking to collaborate on projects like these in the future."

Car dash peril for children

A driver from Walsall who was pursued by police at high speed through streets where children were playing has been spared an immediate prison sentence.

Mohammed Irfan, of Moncrieffe Street, Chukery, reached 50mph in 30mph zones.

Hugh O'Brien-Quinn, prosecuting, told Wolverhampton Crown Court last week that Irfan had been spotted by patrolling police officers using a hand-held phone behind the wheel of a VW Golf.

When the officers operated their flashing blue lights and siren, Irfan accelerated away at speed along streets where children were playing and mothers were out with pushchairs.

One vehicle had to brake sharply to avoid being hit by Irfan's car, said Mr O'Brien-Quinn.

Irfan admitted dangerous driving and was given a 12-week jail term suspended for 18 months and told to carry out 180 hours community service.

Charnjit Jutla, defending, said Irfan "simply became terrified" when he saw the blue lights and was now deeply remorseful.

Judge Martin Walsh said there was the possibility a child could have run into the street. It was only by good fortune the 29-year-old had not injured members of the public.

The judge further disqualified Irfan from driving for two years and ordered him to pay £185 costs.

Pupils are top of the Kreme



Pool Hayes teacher Patrick Ryan with pupils Connor Evans, aged 13, Amy Hussey, Asha Rhoad, Georgia Southam, all 14, Ben Rix and Jacob Dunkley, both 13.

Thrifty pupils at a Willenhall school cooked up a sweet deal to raise £300 for sponsoring the education of two children abroad.

The class of 13 and 14-year-olds at Pool Hayes Arts and Community School set up a doughnut shop to raise money for communities in El Salvador and China.

Krispy Kreme Thursday has been taking place at the Castle Drive school, with the proceeds used to pay medical and education costs of Yichun Jiang, of Liu Shu, China, and Yeni-

Elizabeth Tejada Ayala, of El Salvador, in Central America.

Class 9RP buys the doughnuts from Birmingham-based Krispy Kreme at a reduced price, before selling them off at full price. The latest event raised £292.14.

Teacher Patrick Ryan said his 23 pupils loved to participate and co-ordinated the sale themselves every year. Mr Ryan said they also exchange letters and information about their lives with Yichun and Yeni-Elizabeth, who are both aged 13.

Big thankyou for festive aid

A hospice charity in Walsall has thanked people from across the Black Country for their response to a festive campaign appealing for volunteers and donations.

Acorns Children's Hospice, which provides care for 600 children with life threatening illnesses and 800 families from its three hospices, launched its Be A Star appeal in November.

Local stars have included the Rotary Club of Walsall who raised £3,000 by putting up a Tree of Light at the Saddlers Centre.

Staff at the West Brom building society delivered toys to the hospice in Walstead Road, Walsall, and ambulance drivers at Sandwell Hospital sponsored Christmas messages in aid of Acorns instead of traditional cards.

To help the hospice, call 01564 825091.

Plea for ponies to help collect cash

A children's charity has applied to carry out street collections with miniature Shetland ponies.

The Phoenix Children's Foundation provides disabled and severely ill children with equipment and therapeutic activities. It has applied to Walsall Council for two street collection licences in Aldridge and Walsall for March and August.

The petting ponies visit disabled and sick children in hospices.

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Poorer teens forced to leave school warns MP

The Government's decision to end the education maintenance allowance may force hundreds of children in Walsall to leave school at 16, a Labour MP warned ministers.

The grant of up to £30 per week is handed to the poorest teenagers to encourage them to stay on in education beyond the compulsory school leaving age. Its abolition has sparked protests by students across the country. Spearheading a Commons debate on the impact of its abolition, Walsall North MP David Winnick criticised the move.

He said it would not only force students in his constituency to give up their studies after 16 but also limit skills and enterprise, damaging the area's ambitions for job creation through regeneration, and sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

He said the average annual income in the borough was £21,000 – at the threshold for household earnings at which 16 to 19-year-olds can receive the full benefit.

Families whose income is between £20,818 and £25,521 receive £20 a week and

those on between £25,522 and £30,810, £10 a week.

"The pupils involved would, understandably, be under some financial pressure," said Mr Winnick. "In some instances, they could well be under pressure to leave school at the first opportunity."

"Although £30 a week may not seem much, it is certainly a help. It helps pay for fares, food and other costs, and it comes in very handy."

More than 4,000 teenagers in Walsall get

the allowance to ease family costs of staying on at sixth form or colleges.

Around 63 per cent of pupils at Willenhall School Sports College receive the grant, 57 per cent at Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, 75 per cent at Frank O' Harrison Engineering College, 51 per cent at Walsall Academy and 58 per cent at Walsall College.

The allowance is to be replaced with an enhanced discretionary learner support fund, with a budget of £78m, whilst the existing EMA budget is £560m.

England kit tricksters admit fraud

A fraudster from Aldridge forged the signatures of England football stars on sports shirts and sold them on eBay.

Debt-ridden Ben Coates copied the names of players on to Umbro shirts bought for £5 and sold them with bogus certificates of authenticity for up to £40, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Up to 750 fans were duped by the con that ran for 18 months from the home Coates shared with Lucy Davenport, in Swindon, South Staffordshire.

The scam, which ran for 18 months from February 2008, netted up to £14,000, prosecutor Hugh O'Brien Quinn told the court last week.

The con was uncovered after Umbro, the official England football team kit supplier, was tipped off and bought a shirt with forged signatures for £40.

Specimen signatures of star players were found, along with shirts supposedly signed by England players and the British Lions rugby squad, when officials raided the couple's home.

Coates told police he was driven to launch the football shirt internet scam in a bid to pay off debts after losing his job. The 29-year-old bought shirts for £5, copied signatures on to them and then sold them with bogus certificates of authenticity.

Uncovered

When the scam was uncovered, Coates told police: "I only did it because I was out of work. It was my idea. I would buy them for £5, write on the signatures and sell them on eBay. They sold very well." David Bratt, defending, said: "None of the money was used to live the high life. The couple had debts of up to £12,000."

The pair, who split up soon afterwards, were arrested in September 2009 but not charged until a year later. Coates, now working as a delivery driver and married to another woman, and Davenport, aged 25, now of Rangeways Road, Kingswinford, admitted fraud.

Coates was sentenced to a year in jail, suspended for two years, with 240 hours unpaid work. Davenport was given a 36 week jail sentence, suspended for two years, with 180 hours unpaid work. They must each pay a £2,515 fine and £800 towards costs.

Wait goes on for new-style signs

Hi-tech information signs to ease traffic problems in Walsall have yet to be switched on, nine months after the £100,000 project was due to go live.

There is still no date in sight for six signs on busy routes across the borough to become operational. They have been put in place to provide up-to-date congestion-busting information such as road closures and accidents.

The signs were expected to be in use last Easter but Walsall Council said they were awaiting the go-ahead to get them connected to a BT line.

The digital information signs are to be used in Wolverhampton Road, Bescot Road, Lichfield Road and Somerfield Road, Bloxwich, Birmingham Road and Darlaston Road.

Walsall Council's transport chief, Councillor Tom Ansell, said: "The delay is because we are waiting for the utility service to wire them up. We are in their hands."

Mayor the guest of honour as care home opens doors

The Mayor of Walsall has been invited to open a new care home in the borough this week.

Councillor Gary Clarke is due to cut the ribbon at Cedar Falls Care Home, in Bescot Road, on Friday, January 21.

On the Thursday, he was due to visit a new Walsall Council depot in Pelsall Road.

Councillor Clarke is also attending the Welfare to Work organisation at Pertemps People Development Group, in Bradford Place, Walsall, to hand out certificates.

Freed inmate in fight

An abusive drunk was arrested for fighting in Walsall town centre just hours after being released from prison.

Alan Kenneth Walker, of Caldmore Road, was returned to jail for 12 weeks by the town's magistrates.

He admitted affray and breaching a criminal anti-social behaviour order in Leicester Street on Monday, January 10.

John Walker, defending, said the 59-year-old had been released from prison at Winslow Green, Birmingham, earlier that day and had drunk two glasses of wine at a pub before making his way home to Walsall.

"At about 3.50pm two people were having a scrap. Alan Walker stumbled across them and for some unknown reason put down his carrier bags and joined in," he said.

"All he can remember is waking up in Walsall Manor Hospital," Mr Walker added.

Walker was seen on CCTV throwing punches at passers-by.

He was jailed last month for eight weeks for breach of a Crasbo issued in 2009 for persistent bad behaviour. Walker, a former Queen Mary Grammar pupil, had assaulted a teenage girl who tried to calm him down.

Wizard wheeze

People can find out more about a health technique at a drop-in session in Walsall this weekend.

The Bowen Technique claims to help people suffering from conditions including asthma, tennis elbow or digestive problems.

Walsall Mind and Body Centre, in Hawes Close, off Broadway, is hosting the event on Saturday, January 22, with a talk and demonstration of the technique from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

Anglers disgusted as dead fish pollute pool

Willenhall Memorial Park was a "scene from a horror film" as thousands of dead fish floated in the pool, anglers claim. The entire stock of around 5,000 has been wiped out at the park because of this winter's freezing weather.

The dead fish have been rotting in the water and causing a terrible smell, according to pool bailiff Tony Bray, a member of Parkside Fishing Club. Mr Bray, aged 57, said he was devastated more was not done to save the creatures.

"It is absolutely disgusting at the pool and the smell is turning people's stomachs."

"I think Walsall Council should have done more to save the fish and now clean up the site. I offered to camp out at the park overnight so they could have pumps running 24 hours a day to save the fish."

"It's just a terrible tale. I take disabled people fishing at the pool every summer – what will we do this year? There are no fish left there."

Mr Bray added: "Dead fish are lying around everywhere, stinking. It's like a scene from a horror film."

Walsall Council said it had done all it could to save the pool's fish, at a cost of more than £1,000, but the outcome had been disappointing.

Council parks manager Nigel Ilsey said the authority had now ordered an aerator to oxygenate the pool at Willenhall Memorial Park during the summer months and may add calcium carbonate to the water to break down the poisonous sediments at the bottom of the pool.

Attracting

The fish, including carp and roach, have died after last month's sub-zero conditions froze the water.

Temperatures as low as -12C (10F) caused a thick layer of ice to form on the already shallow waters.

Walsall Council said it had hired a digger on at least three occasions to try to break the ice.

Mr Ilsey added: "The saga has been disappointing to all, but sadly, it's simply nature running its course."

"Park visitors and residents can be reassured that we're doing as much as we can."

Thieves have stolen fish, using pitchforks and shovels to load them into vehicles.

Vandals are also pulling apart wooden fences at the park so that they can prod and poke the dead fish in the water.



Horried Parkside Fishing Club member Tony Bray at Willenhall Memorial Park.

Lout patrols cut hedges

Hedges are being removed at a Walsall park in a bid to stamp down on anti-social behaviour and litter. Work is under way on the £200,000 revamp of Kings Hill park.

Councillor Anthony Harris, cabinet member for leisure, said: "Some of the hedges are being removed to help reduce litter and reduce anti-social behaviour which is a real concern to

local residents. This will benefit the whole community."

"Walsall Council's Greenspaces team and Friends of Darlaston South Parks are working together on the five-year scheme to carry out immediate improvements and prioritise further work as and when funding becomes available," added Councillor Harris.

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Action to clear up surgery

Action is being taken to clear up a neglected former doctor's surgery in Willenhall which has become a magnet for yobs and vandals. It follows months of complaints from neighbours and councillors about the state of Ednam House.

The surgery was owned by Dr Amoolya Prasad, who was suspended from practising in Walsall in 2004.

The building in Bloxwich Road South has been repeatedly targeted by arsonists, while drug paraphernalia and dumped rubbish has also been found there.

Council chiefs have tracked down the owner and are now ordering the site to be cleared up.

Regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew, said: "The council is concerned at the state of these properties following complaints from members of the public."

"Councillors have approved formal action to issue a notice under Section 215 of the Planning Act requiring that the owners undertake urgent works to improve the appearance of the property. The notice will be served in the near future."

Willenhall South councillor Carl Creaney welcomed the action but said it was "a long time coming".

"It's about time the owners of the building started taking responsibility for the property," he said.

"There have been nothing but problems there with fly-tipping and the general state of the building being an eyesore."

"I think at one point there were five fire attacks in a week, and that was time the fire brigade and police could have been out saving lives."

Former owner Dr Prasad was suspended after patients complained about the level of care they received.

Weight loss programme

Walsall residents can get trim by signing up to a new weight loss programme.

Evolve is running at Oak Park Leisure Centre and Bloxwich Leisure Centre.

It aims to help people make small manageable changes to their lifestyle, activity and diet.

The 12-week programme costs £40, which must be paid in advance, or £3.50 per session.

Men with a body mass index over 30 can attend for free thanks to funding from NHS Walsall.

Individual consultations will be held with everyone interested in joining the programme to assess whether it is suitable for their individual needs.

To make an appointment, call sport and leisure development services on 01902 605500.

Sporting dinner

Midlands boxer Richie Woodhall will be holding a sporting dinner at Walsall Football Club this spring.

He will be appearing alongside comedian Austin Knight in Bescot Crescent on May 5. Tickets are priced at £30 including a four-course meal and are available by calling 01922 651414.

Inquest on woman

A retired secretary died after falling down the stairs at her Walsall home on Christmas Day.

Kathleen Elizabeth Beddows, aged 81, died at Walsall Manor Hospital hours later, an inquest heard.

Care worker Lisa Lewis, of Complete Care, told the hearing she found the widow when she visited her home in Willenhall Street, Darlaston, at 10.20am.

"I found her lying at the foot of the stairs. She was unconscious, but was breathing. Her right eye was swollen," Miss Lewis said.

Black Country Coroner Mr Robin Balmain told the inquest a post mortem gave the cause of death as bleeding of the brain, hypothermia and cardiac arrest. He recorded a verdict that Mrs Beddows died as a result of an accident.

Music workshops

A children's workshop will be showing youngsters how to bring music into their lives in Walsall.

The session, to be held at Walsall Museum on February 24, will be hosted by Ruth Radcliffe and will inspire children to create their own musical instruments using recycled materials.

The workshops will be held at 10am and 1pm at the Lichfield Street

museum, and are suitable for children aged between six and 12. They coincide with the Classic Beats drums exhibition at the museum. The drums collection belongs to 'Sir' Alan Buckley.

Admission is 75p per child. To book, call 01922 653116.

On March 1 there will be a performance from 'Sir' Alan Buckley and Friends at the museum.

Turning ban bid for safety

Cars could be stopped from turning into a busy Bloxwich street in a bid to improve pedestrian safety.

Walsall Council has unveiled plans to stop drivers travelling northbound along the A34 High Street, Bloxwich, from turning left into Bell Lane.

They also plan to stop motorists turning right into Bell Lane when travelling southbound along the A34 Stafford Road.

A public notice has now been produced asking for people's views on the move, which is part of a raft of measures to improve Bloxwich High Street.

Walsall's transport chief Councillor Tom Ansell said: "During our consultation for the improvements to Bloxwich High Street we had a large number of requests to introduce pedestrian facilities at the Bell Lane junction."

"The junction currently has no crossing facilities but Councillor Ansell said installing a push-button crossing would "severely increase congestion" at the junction.

"We are therefore installing pedestrian refuges, tactile paving and dropped kerbs to allow safe pedestrian crossing at the junction without a push button," he said.

"However, in order to ensure we provide safe facilities we need to limit the flow of traffic turning into Bell Lane." Objections to the proposed order can be put in writing to council chiefs.

Accident rule on pensioner

A pensioner who suffered a fall at a Willenhall care home died as a result of an accident, an inquest ruled.

Florence May King, aged 88, was found collapsed on the floor at Wine-halla Court, Sandbeds Road, Short Heath, on December 17.

Black Country corner Mr Robin Balmain told the inquest held at Walsall Manor Hospital last week Mrs King, a widow, was discovered unconscious near her bed by two carers who went to check her shortly after 7am. He said she died at the hospital later the same day.

Mr Balmain said there was no way of knowing what caused Mrs King to fall. He told the hearing a CT scan showed the pensioner had suffered a substantial bleed in the brain, the cause of her death.

He told Mrs King's son Terry, of The Crescent, he would record the death as a result of an accident.

Officer to face trial on fraud charges

A detective constable with West Midlands Police will stand trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court accused of a £4,000 fraud.

Stephen Murphy, of Pinfold Lane, Aldridge, pleaded not guilty to 16 charges relating to fraud by false representation.

The 40-year-old is accused of cashing housing benefit cheques for a tenant who had moved out, between July 2007 and December 2008. The trial has been set for July 4 and is expected to last up to four days.

Cut library services 'will be even better'

Walsall's leisure boss has insisted he would be able to offer an "improved service" despite the decision to close six libraries across the borough.

It was revealed last week that six branches and 21 jobs will go as Walsall Council battles to save £65 million.

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Police not to blame for death

A police complaints inquiry was launched after an epileptic man who was twice restrained by officers for attacking hospital staff died, an inquest was told.

John Law died at Walsall Manor Hospital on July 9.

The inquest heard he struck hospital workers including a nurse with a walking frame and police officers were called to help subdue him on July 1 and 2.

He died of broncho-pneumonia and alcohol-related heart and liver disease.

An Independent Police Complaints Commission inquiry has since cleared officers of any blame after the matter was referred by West Midlands Police.

Unmarried Mr Law, aged 52, of Thomas House, Stoney Lane, Little Bloxwich, was taken to hospital after being arrested on July 1 after allegedly setting fire to a carpet at the block of flats where he lived.

Consultant pathologist Nicholas Hunt said Mr Law had been "acting strangely and hallucinating". He added: "When he arrived at hospital, handcuffs became necessary."

Police were called as it was said Mr Law was attacking people, Mr Hunt said.

Following two further incidents the next day when officers were called, he suffered cardiac arrest.

Mr Hunt said Mr Law had serious health problems including epilepsy, heart scarring and brain shrinkage consistent with a history of heavy drinking.

Black Country coroner Robin Balmain recorded a verdict that Mr Law died as a result of natural causes.

Knife used in robbery

A man was robbed at knifepoint in Bentley, Walsall. A Ford Focus drove up to the victim, aged 56, in Canterbury Avenue at about 3.40am on January 11. Two men got out and threatened him before stealing £30, a mobile phone, watch and gold ring. Both men were around 20, black, 6ft, and of medium build.

Witnesses can call 0345 113 5000.

The hole pint of a well is...



Tony Madani shows off the well under the bar at The Miners Arms in Rushall

Drinkers at a Walsall pub could be forgiven for thinking they've had one too many when they go to the bar and see a 50ft-deep well.

But the illuminated hole is a feature of The Miners Arms, Rushall.

The mysterious well was discovered during a revamp of the 19th century pub.

But instead of hiding it away under floorboards and forgetting all about it, new licensee Tony Madani has decided to make it a showpiece – even

adding a bulb and a glass lid.

Regulars at the Lichfield Road pub were shocked to discover the well, which had been underneath their feet the whole time.

It is located just under the old bar counter and some believe it may have been there since the pub was built in the 1840s.

Mr Madani, aged 53, said the well was now a talking point in the local community and would feature prominently in his future design plans.

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Driver handed award

A Walsall man has proved he has the drive for success after scooping a top industry award.

Steve Ward, of Park Road, Bloxwich, was named as Fleet Driver of the Year at the Motor Transport Awards for his work with TNT Express Services.

The 59-year-old impressed judges with his green approach to safe and fuel efficient driving, as well as for a charity drive around the UK.

Mr Ward navigated through the recent snow and ice in a specially-decorated 44ft lorry depicting a giant cheque for £305,137 – the total amount donated by TNT employees to a children's charity Wooden Spoon last year.

He took the lorry on a two-week tour of TNT depots, including Cannock, Worcester and Birmingham, to show employees how much they'd raised.

A former heating engineer, Mr Ward came out of semi-retirement to join TNT in 2001 and said he was delighted with the award.

"I may have been the one singled out for the award but I owe it all to a number of people, especially my colleagues, Neil McCallum, our Operations Manager and Dave Copping, our Team Leader in Operations Training," Mr Ward said.

"I consider myself to be incredibly fortunate to be doing a job I love for a great company."

Volunteers forum date

Managers of voluntary groups in Walsall are being invited to meet other team leaders to share ideas and information.

The next meeting of the Volunteers Managers' Network will be on February 28.

The forum meets at Central Hall Methodist Church, Ablewell Street, from 10.30am to 1pm. To book call 01922 619840.

Party invite

Senior citizens in Pelsall are being invited to book places for a party. The bash will be held at Pelsall Community Centre, Station Road, on January 29. It is a free event. Residents should contact 07960 503512 to book.

14 sites are failing pupils in exams tally

Fourteen schools in the West Midlands are failing pupils in their GCSE exams, league tables suggested today.

The worst performers in Walsall were those recently put into special measures by school inspector Ofsted.

At Frank F Harrison Engineering College in Bloxwich, 24 per cent of children gained at least five A* to C grades including English and maths, while at nearby Sneyd Community

School, which is due to close this summer, it was 27 per cent.

At Blue Coat School, which was given a notice to improve by Ofsted, 30 per cent of pupils got at least five A* to C grades including English and maths.

Grace Academy in Darlaston, and Willenhall School Sports College in Furzebank Way, were also classed as poor with 32 per cent achieving at least five A* to C grades including

English and maths. Graham Talbot, interim managing director for Walsall Children's Services – Serco, said: "The local authority continues to support these schools in partnership with the Black Country Challenge making effective links with other schools and the deployment of local and national leaders of education to continue to drive up standards."

Many schools in Walsall improved

on last year's results, although it kept its position of 131st out of 151.

All students at Queen Mary's Grammar and Queen Mary's High School achieved five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and maths, and both schools were ranked in the top 200 nationally. St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College showed the most improvement, where 79 per cent reached the same level, an increase of 21 per cent.

Schools have reason to celebrate results

walsallchronicle@
expressandstar.co.uk

Schools in Walsall are celebrating rising GCSE results despite the authority maintaining its lowly position in the national league tables.

Figures show 49.5 per cent of students gained five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and maths, compared to 44 per cent last year.

Walsall has stayed the same as last year in the national league tables, ranking 131 out of 151. The highest achievers were Queen Mary's Grammar and Queen Mary's High School.

At those schools, 100 per cent of student achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and maths.

The school which made the most improvement was St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College where 79 per cent reached this level, an increase of 21 per cent last year.

Improvement

An average of 75.3 per cent of students in Walsall gained five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, not including English and Maths, compared with 65 per cent last year. Brownhills Community Technology College made the most improvement with 93 per cent of students reaching this level, an increase of 44 percentage points compared to last year.

Queen Mary's Grammar also had the highest points score per candidate for A-levels in the authority with 1107.4. Queen Mary's High School came in second with 978.4 and St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College was third with 886.2.

Graham Talbot, interim managing director of Walsall Children's Services at Serco, the private firm which runs the borough's education, said: "We are very pleased with these results and congratulate the students."

"We are delighted that Walsall has shown an improvement of 5.5 percentage points in the measure 5 + A*-C including English and maths and 10 percentage points in 5 + A*-C."

Councillor Rachel Andrew, cabinet member for children's services, added: "These results reflect the hard work taking place in our schools every day. Through partnership we will continue to provide support to schools in our joint commitment to transform learning in Walsall."

Table shows how your child's school rated

Walsall

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Abu Bakr Boys School	20	65%	6	326.9	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Abu Bakr Girls School	48	60%	8	354.9	35%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Aldridge School Science College	260	62%	7	466.2	14%	977.7	696.3	6	3.50%
Alumwell Business & Enterprise College	156	41%	17	432	7%	994.5	541.3	18	7.50%
Barr Beacon Language College	241	67%	5	523.9	13%	1019.7	772.5	5	1.60%
Blue Coat CofE School	158	30%	21	365.7	8%	957.7	469.8	20	8.50%
Brownhills Community College	144	51%	12	482.6	2%	1010.6	590.8	13	4.70%
Emmanuel School	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Frank F Harrison Engineering College	152	24%	23	430.6	1%	1024.4	556.6	15	7.80%
Grace Academy, Darlaston	167	32%	20	359.6	0%	971.9	551.1	16	8.70%
Hydesville Tower School	33	82%	3	391.4	12%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Joseph Leckie Community College	186	41%	18	295.4	0%	952.1	582.9	14	8.50%
Palfrey Girls School	40	45%	15	448.3	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pool Hayes Arts & Community School	204	49%	13	457.3	5%	991.6	689.6	8	4.60%
Queen Mary's Grammar School	96	100%	1	596.3	68%	1019.3	1107.4	1	0.00%
Queen Mary's High School	96	100%	2	516.7	81%	997.2	978.4	2	0.00%
St Francis of Assisi Technology College	180	79%	4	493.1	6%	1008.3	886.2	3	1.10%
St Thomas More Catholic School	228	47%	14	430.7	7%	990.6	690.9	7	3.10%
Second Chances	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sheffield Community Academy	205	44%	16	587.4	0%	1049.7	685.2	9	4.10%
Shire Oak School Science College	224	54%	10	470.6	15%	996.4	773	4	4.40%
Sneyd Community School	185	27%	22	302.1	1%	948.2	547.5	17	10.70%
The Streethly School, Sutton Coldfield	242	56%	9	498.1	13%	1011.3	623.8	12	3.50%
Walsall Academy	165	52%	11	632.7	16%	1002.6	635.4	10	0.80%
Walsall College	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	489.3	19	n/a
Willenhall School Sports College	263	32%	19	468.5	5%	1002.3	629.9	11	8.10%

This shows every secondary school, listed alphabetically for each local education authority area and, from left to right, after the school name and details, the table shows:

a. The number of pupils eligible for GCSE and equivalent qualifications. This is defined as the number of pupils at the start of Key Stage 4, which usually means all pupils in Year 11.

b. The proportion of candidates getting five A* to C-grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths.

c. The rank within its local authority which the school achieved according to the proportion of pupils getting five Cs in GCSE subjects including English and maths. Ties are broken by average GCSE points score.

d. The average GCSE points score per pupil. GCSEs and qualifications judged to be "equivalent" to GCSEs are assigned points. For example, a GCSE, grade B = 46 points; National Certificate in Business, merit = 196 points. There are too many qualifications now being included to list each one alongside its points score.

e. The percentage of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate (see notes to Table 5 for explanation).

f. The school's Key Stage 2 (age 11) to GCSE contextual value-added score (see notes to Table 7 for explanation).

g. The A-Level points score per candidate, including other "equivalent" qualifications.

h. The rank within its local authority the school achieved according to its A-Level points score per candidate. Ties are broken by the average number of points scored per exam entry (figure not shown).

i. The percentage of pupils who were persistently absent.

NOTE: Care should be taken when comparing results for schools with small numbers of pupils eligible for the exams.

Scheme to transform transport

Drivers could be squeezed out and car lanes reduced under plans to transform some of the busiest routes in the Black Country and Birmingham into "low carbon corridors".

Among those routes being considered is the A449 Stafford Road in Wolverhampton, where £2.4m was invested in a red route that was scrapped amid complaints just 18 months later. The 404 bus route through Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall is also being looked at to pilot the initiative.

West Midlands transport authority Centro has revealed it is preparing a bid for between £50m and £60m of the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to pay for the project.

Its aim is to encourage people to change their travel habits to ease congestion on the roads. But critics warned the move could spell more misery for motorists.

It would see the introduction of new lanes for fleets of super green electric and hybrid buses, cycle lanes, electric car charging points and car sharing schemes along some of the region's busiest routes.

Travel plans for neighbouring businesses and schools would also be developed to reduce the number of cars on the roads.

Residents would be door-stepped to be given help and advice on journeys and switching to greener methods of travel.

People would also be encouraged to walk and cycle more to not only change their travel behaviour but also embrace healthier lifestyles.

Centro says each low carbon corridor would be tailored to meet community needs.

The LSTF, amounting to £560m between 2011/12 and 2014/15, is available to transport authorities outside London to bid for funding.

Anything goes for music group

A Walsall music group is preparing for its next production later in the year up and running but is looking for more cast members.

Aldridge Musical Comedy Society is beginning preparations to make sure that its next show is all ship shape and Bristol fashion by presenting Cole Porter's delightful musical farce Anything Goes in May.

The show is set on the ocean liner the S.S. American and will feature such classic songs as You're the Tops, Blow Gabriel Blow and of course the show's title number, Anything Goes.

The society is on the lookout for new crew members. Chairman, Julie Lamb said: "Anything Goes is a huge production, and as is the case with most societies we're looking to boost our male chorus. We have a great production team and are looking forward to yet another wonderful production, but we do have parts that we need to fill."

"Rehearsals began on 5th January, we rehearse each Tuesday and Wednesday evening at The Keeling Dance Studio in Aldridge and would welcome any new faces with open arms."

Aldridge Musical Comedy Society will be presenting Anything Goes at the Prince of Wales Theatre Cannock, from May 11-14. Anyone interested in joining the production can contact Julie Lamb on 07885634284.

Casino is to reopen after £1.5m revamp

A Walsall casino will reopen at the end of February after a £1.5 million revamp.

Grosvenor Casino in Bentley Mill Way, Walsall, will relaunch as G Casino, with 20 members of staff added to its 75-strong workforce. G Casino will offer 24-hour gambling. General manager Matt Rudd said: "We are working hard to remove some of the barriers often associated with casinos."

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Massive operation to tackle the potholes

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

A mammoth operation to repair thousands of potholes across the Midlands is under way.

In some areas, dedicated teams of inspectors has been tasked with scouring the streets in a bid to highlight the worst-hit spots.

Councils are facing bills for millions of pounds in repairs. In Walsall, a dedicated team of inspectors has been asked to pinpoint the borough's worst roads.

Transport chief Councillor Tom Ansell, said weather-related repairs were expected to cost around £400,000.

"We have four inspectors who are working constantly to assess the borough's roads and identify potholes to be repaired. They are working alongside our partners Tarmac who are responsible for repairing the defects," he added.

Problem roads in the Walsall area include Willenhall Road, Lazy Hill Road in Aldridge and Queslett Road in Great Barr. Profit Street in North Walsall, Stafford Street and Moat Road near to Walsall Manor Hospital have also been described as treacherous.

Freezing

In Staffordshire the cost of repairing potholes is expected to top £1.85 million.

Highways inspectors have sourced 600 new road defects caused by freezing conditions between December 1 and today. Specialist pothole patrols are using satellite technology to locate faults before beaming back details to a central control centre.

Dudley Council also has five inspectors monitoring roads in the borough on an ongoing basis and are asking members of the public to report any potholes near to their homes.

In Sandwell officers are drawing up a priority list of problem areas and the council is set to spend £700,000 on repairs.

Large cracks and holes have also opened up along stretches of the Birmingham New Road, which runs through both Sandwell and Dudley from Birmingham to Wolverhampton, while taxi drivers in Wolverhampton have reported problems along other major routes.

And Lily Street in West Bromwich was closed for the day while Sandwell Council carried out emergency repairs to the road.

Veteran vets celebrating 25 years



Celebrating 25 years in business is head vet Richard Hillman from Hillman Vets.

It has brought comfort to thousands of families over the years by treating countless poorly pets, and now a Walsall vets is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Chief vet Richard Hillman established the surgery, Hillman Vets, with just himself and one nurse all those years ago but now has six branches across the region.

Mr Hillman said it had been a lot of hard work but his team was now "rightly proud" of the little empire. The other branches are in Palfrey, Brownhills, Cannock, Darlaston and Lichfield.

Practice manager Jacky Hands has been working for Mr Hillman for seven years.

She said: "Everybody has meetings together, and everybody knows each other. We have separate branches but we aren't separate entities, we are one team. At every branch you get the same service."

From its humble beginnings, the surgery now offers the latest technological treatment, such as ultrasound scanning, a biochemistry machine and a dental theatre.

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Main route in line for major work

A "dilapidated" main route into Walsall is included in plans for the regeneration of a neighbourhood, council chiefs say.

Walsall Council bosses say Stafford Street will be included in plans for the regeneration of Birchills, which are currently being put together.

It comes after Blakenhall councillor Pete Smith tabled a question at a recent meeting of the full council, asking what action will be taken "to address the situa-

tion of long time boarded up properties on one of the main arterial routes to Walsall from the north of the borough."

But regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew said many of the rundown buildings and boarded up shop units were in private ownership.

"As Councillor Smith will know, most of the shops and units are in private ownership and taking action against a private owner is a long and laborious task," he

said. "But he will not be aware of the Birchills regeneration that is taking place and the plans are being put together with colleagues from the Birchills and Leamore wards. Stafford Street is included in those plans."

Councillor Andrew added some units had already been brought back to life as a butchers shop and a cafe.

He said the council was in talks with unit owners.

Serco is an award winner

An anti-bullying strategy in Walsall has won a national award.

Walsall Children's Services Serco, the private company in charge of borough education, won the title at the Children and Young People Now awards.

It was a double triumph for Walsall as Joseph Leckie Community Technology College received the extended schools award for doing the most to engage with the wider community.

Serco's strategy was said to be the most effective in reducing bullying and the harm it causes.

Sharon Tott, head of access and entitlement, said the award was a recognition of the hard work of Serco, its partners and young people.

Christian art

Contemporary Christian artwork is on display in Walsall. The exhibition containing 23 pieces of work by Christine Capewell, aged 58, of Aldridge, is on show at The Crossing at St Pauls, in Darwell Street, until February 7.

Sister Dora's fame spreads

Sister Dora's fame article on great has spread world wide. Mr Kuczewski visited the statue, her grave in Queen's Street and Pelsall. He was shown around by Pelsall businessman Sim Mayou.

Mr Kuczewski collected facts about the nurse and Walsall's heritage. He and wife, Carmen, of Montreal, Canada, run a website and want an

historian who visited the statue, her grave in Queen's Street and Pelsall. He was shown around by Pelsall businessman Sim Mayou.

Historian Andre Kuczewski meets Sim Mayou as he researches Sister Dora.



News in brief

New venue for ale event

The annual Walsall Beer Festival will take place at Walsall College, Littleton Street on April 14-16.

Organisers say it is moving from its home of 15 years, Walsall Town Hall, because it can't afford to pay the £6,000 hire.

Walsall Camra spokesman Mick McDevitt said: "With the event's growing popularity, the college offers an opportunity to expand."

Craft time at museum

An adult craft workshop will be held at Walsall Museum on February 3 at 12.30pm.

The Lichfield Street museum will show how to make a sun catcher.

The session is part of monthly workshops for adults. Call 01922 653116 to book.

Meeting date

The next Coalpool Residents meeting will be held on January 26 from 6.30 to 8pm at Dartmouth Youth Centre in New Forest Road, Walsall.

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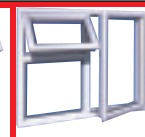
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It's there in black and white, 50 year old TV Reg's set has kept tuning in for decades

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

While many are snapping up 3D TVs and embracing the digital revolution, one Walsall family is sticking with the faithful black and white portable they bought almost 50 years ago. Since 1964, a 14-inch black and white TV has been a fixture in the home of pensioners Stan and Joan Buckler, of Darlaston.

After almost five decades it is still going strong. Every morning the couple switch on their trusted set to watch the latest news headlines. Although the couple do have a modern 32-inch television, they do not want to part with their Ferguson TV.

However, the digital switch over later this year is likely to render their set redundant.

Discount

The TV was bought when Mrs Buckler, now aged 81, joined the MEB and was granted a discount on the set in 1964.

Since then it has been a permanent fixture at their Heathfield Lane home.

Channels are changed by rotating a button on the front and despite its lack of mod cons, Mr Buckler, aged 80, said he would be sad to see it go.

Quality

"I still watch the news on it every morning while I have my breakfast," said the former draughtsman and senior contracts engineer at Gibbons Brothers in Brierley Hill.

"I wouldn't have expected it to last this long but the picture quality is still good."

Mr Buckler said the television just keeps on going.

"I am amazed the picture still comes on," he said.

"I can't remember how much it cost but it just keeps soldiering on. It will be a shame when digital comes in and I can't use it."

"But we may just keep it for sentimental reasons."



Joan Buckler with her Ferguson TV which is still going strong after nearly 50 years.

A television set which has been going strong for 40 years is still providing hours of happy viewing for a Walsall couple.

Reginald Burfoot and his wife Kathleen bought the Sony Trinitron 13in colour TV to use in their caravan in 1981 – when it had already been in use for a decade.

Now based in the spare bedroom of their St George's Street home in Darlaston, even though it is often switched off for several months, it springs back into life when required.

Retired bread salesman Mr Burfoot, now 80, said: "A London museum once wanted to take it off us. Some years ago I rang them up because they were advertising for a television of that age."

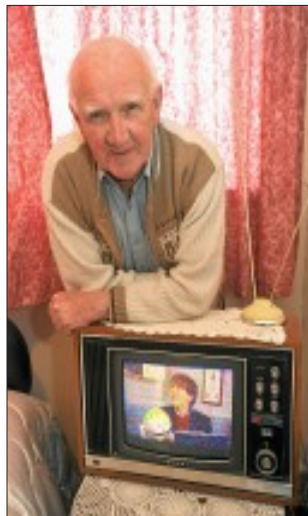
History

"When I phoned them up to see if they were interested in mine they told me all about the history of the model, but wouldn't offer any money for it, just tickets for 12 months in exchange. So I decided to keep it instead. It's useful if anything goes wrong with our modern model."

"It has a portable aerial, but you can still get a decent picture. I've got no reason to get rid of it and unless someone comes up with the right price I'm going to keep it."

"We bought it in 1981 from a chap at a holiday caravan park for £90 because we had bought a caravan and needed a TV for it. It's never broke since I've owned it. Sometimes I leave it for a few months then I'll switch it on to give it a bit of an airing," Mr Burfoot said.

The model was built with a brown wooden case, a common feature of 1970s models. Mr Burfoot, who has lived in Darlaston all his life, worked at Hickinbottom & Sons bakery in Wednesbury which baked Sunblest, and Scribbles bakery, Hockley, Birmingham which had a depot in Walsall. The couple have lived in their home since 1971.



Reginald Burfoot, 80, of Darlaston with his working 1971, 13inch, Sony Trinitron TV.

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19 to lose jobs as axe falls on £52m project

thechronicle

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Nineteen people will lose their jobs when a £52 million regeneration project comes to an end in Walsall.

Walsall New Deal for Communities (NDC) will close on March 31, resulting in council staff being made redundant.

From April 1, five new non-council jobs will be created for the New Horizons Community Enterprise charitable company, which will continue the Walsall NDC legacy.

The project, formed in 2001 to regenerate Blakenall, Bloxwich and Leamore, has proven to be one of the most successful in the country.

Nationwide

In the 39-strong performance list of New Deal schemes nationwide, Walsall came in seventh. Wolverhampton was 14th, Sandwell 26th and Birmingham Kings Norton bottom of the table at 39th.

A report to council bosses said the Walsall scheme had created an "attractive environment and a place where people want to live".

Blakenall, Bloxwich and Leamore were selected for regeneration in 2000 after it was revealed they were in the top 10 per cent of deprived areas in the country.

The revamp has included the creation of more than 300 new homes and improvements to the three main shopping centres.

The £8.34m Blakenall Village Centre was also built, offering health, housing, library and community services all under one roof.

A total of £4.8 million was also spent on the Stan Ball over-50s centre and £919,000 on the Young Person's Information Centre, offering health, education and training services to 11 to 19-year-olds.

Fire drama follows collision



The dramatic crash scene in Lucknow Road, Willenhall, is caught on camera.



Fire crews at the scene of the accident involving a Land Rover and Fiesta.

This was the dramatic scene when a car collided with another and burst into flames.

A Land Rover Discovery and Ford Fiesta crashed in Lucknow Road, Willenhall, last week. The male driver of the Land Rover, aged 70, is believed to have suffered a

heart attack and lost control. The impact sent the Fiesta plunging into another three cars, setting it on fire, with flames spreading to the Land Rover. Both drivers managed to get out of their cars before firefighters from Bloxwich and Walsall arrived. The Land

Rover driver was taken to New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton, while the female driver of the Ford Fiesta was given a precautionary check-up by paramedics. The road was closed for two hours to clear the scene and carry out investigations.

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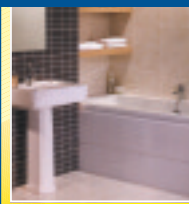
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thechronicle

Applications sent in for scrutiny

Planning applications submitted to Walsall Council include:

498 to 500 Pleck Road, Walsall: change of use from car showroom to office licence. **Former Redhouse School, Gorsey Way, Aldridge:** reserved matters application to determine appearance, layout and scale for 24 houses, to build the community centre after occupation of the houses. **49 Northgate, Aldridge:** two-storey side and single-storey rear extension with roof lights to front and rear.

Land fronting Willenhall Road, Darlaston: none material amendment – increased length of approved building.

7 Westbourne Road, Darlaston: single-storey rear extension.

176 Bloxwich Road, Walsall: change of use from A1 Retail to A5 hot food take-away. **Homebargains, Town Centre Shopping Centre, Samuel Street, Bloxwich:** Replace existing trolley bay.

Castings PLC, Gatehouse Trading Estate, Lichfield Road, Brownhills: new warehouse and car park with associated internal service roads and landscaping. **1 Woodside Close, Walsall:** demolition of existing building and construction of 14, two bedroom apartments.

10 Park Road, Walsall: two-storey side extension and single-storey front and rear extensions.

Land rear of 13 Broadway, Walsall: change of use from residential garden

land to storage area for materials, plant and equipment related to the maintenance and upkeep of the golf course and grounds together with occasional overspill car parking. **12 Park Road, Walsall:** proposed first floor side extension.

55 Charlemont Road, Walsall: two-storey side extension, single-storey rear extension and detached play room/store in garden. **435 West Bromwich Road, Walsall:** two-storey side and rear extension to lounge, kitchen, bedrooms and bathroom. **Land corner of Tame Drive, Walsall Road, Pelsall:** erection of dwelling on corner of Tame Drive/Walsall Road with detached garage and parking and external works.

Foundry fortunes pick up

A foundry in Walsall which was forced to axe 35 jobs when the recession has had some better fortune thanks to a revival in the motor industry.

Bosses at Chamberlin & Hill, which manufactures castings for vehicles have been helped in their recovery by the growing turbocharger market, picking up new business in the Far East.

A total of 124 work in the foundry at the Chukery Road plant and around 30 in the office. The firm makes castings for luxury cars including BMW and Porsche.

The foundry has now attracted orders from the rising economies of China and India.

Production of new turbocharger parts is due to start this year.

The company recently went back up to full-time working with overtime shifts added.

Bosses say the weakness of the pound has also helped.

Sarah aims to get under people's skin

A self-taught tattoo artist has opened her own studio in Walsall after being inspired by her late father.

Sarah Carter, 24, of Aldridge, launched her tattoo and art studio, Human Canvas, in the Victorian Arcade, Bradford Street.

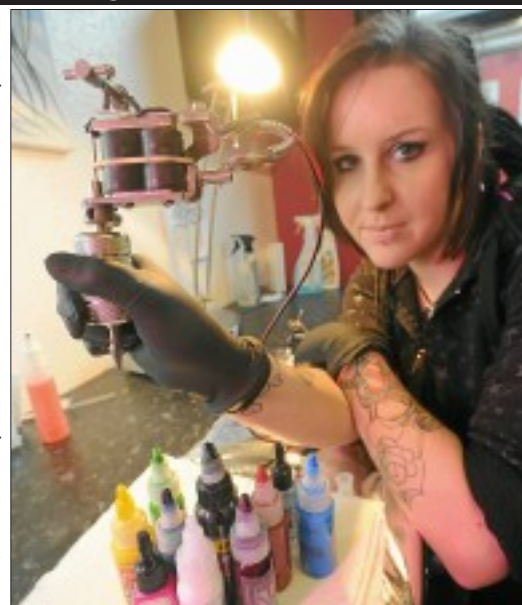
The mother-of-two was encouraged by father, Andy Humphries, who died of a brain haemorrhage in 2008, aged 46.

Opening the studio created two apprentice positions. A self-employed body piercer will also work there. Mrs Carter was given her first tattoo machine at 17 by father-of-four and self-employed builder Mr Humphries. She said: "My dad always wanted me to run my own shop."

Mrs Carter, who has 14 tattoos and gave herself some, did a business management course at Breathing Space, Green, Walsall, and got a £1,000 bursary from the organisation.

The studio sells paintings, art prints, jewellery and accessories.

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Sarah Carter who has opened her own the tattoo studio.

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thechronicle

Calls for review over gritting town streets

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Traders in Willenhall have demanded a review of gritting in the town, claiming untreated streets led to a drop in visits from pre-Christmas shoppers.

Angry shopkeepers have hit out, saying town centre streets were not treated as they have been in previous years.

But council chiefs refuted the claims, insisting the streets had been tackled by the borough's grit teams.

Butcher Tony Butler, who runs Conway's in Market Place, claims pensioners and other shoppers had been put off venturing into the town.

"I was out delivering orders two hours after I'd closed on Christmas Eve just because people couldn't get into the town," he said.

Tears

"I had one elderly woman who rang in tears because she had come down on the bus but couldn't walk through the town and had to go back. I took the order to her.

"I haven't seen anyone gritting the roads or any evidence of grit at all and this is the first year I can say that.

"In the past, they used to clear all the snow and pile it up on the Wakes ground nearby."

Councillor Carl Creaney, representative for Willenhall South, called for a review of the way district centre streets are handled in the snow.

He said: "I've spoken to a lot of traders and shoppers in the town who have all said the same thing - the roads had not been treated."

Walsall Council's traffic and transportation manager Glyn Oliver insisted Willenhall town centre had been gritted during the Christmas period. "It is included within our winter plan, which was agreed by cabinet in autumn," he said.

He said a mixture of salt and grit was used on December 21 and 22.



Carl Creaney and Tony Butler in Market Place.

Calendars now on sale

Calendars depicting how people used to live in Walsall are now available.

Graphic designer John Griffiths has produced the 2011 calendar, which is the sixth in the series, called Walsall Lives - Remembering the Old Town.

It is available from Athwal News, in Leicester Street, Curio Shop, in George Street, Heaven Sent at The Crossing at St Pauls, in Darwall Street, Waterstones, in Park Street, Walsall Leather Museum, in Littleton Street West, and Walsall Local History Centre, in Essex Street, priced at £6.99.

Chill factor

A display showing how women used to keep warm in the mid-1900s will remain at Walsall Museum until the end of this month. A Chill in the Air is on display in Lichfield Street and includes woollen dresses, thick skirts and cardigans from the 1920s to 60s.

Extension on payment

Developers are set to be given a time extension to pay more than £100,000 to Walsall Council as part of a planning agreement.

Just over £102,000 is due as part of a deal allowing 215 and 217 Lichfield Road to be pulled down to make way for a 21-home estate.

Planning permission was granted in 2008 subject to contributions towards open space and education. It is due when work starts on the project, but developers are asking for this to be delayed until the 10th home is occupied.

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To win this fantastic prize, simply answer the following question: What is the name of the restaurant in the casino?

- A. The Gallery
- B. The Museum
- C. The Aquarium

Send your entries on a postcard to reach us no later than February 4 to Casino Competition, Walsall Chronicle, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES or by email to walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk.

Terms and Conditions:

- Entrants must be over 18 years of age
- Competition closes on Friday February 4 2011

- The prize must be taken on February 24 2011
- Entrants must register at the casino to receive their prize
- Winners and their nominated guests must bring photo ID on the evening
- By accepting the prize, winners are agreeing to publicity.
- The prize is for a maximum of six people



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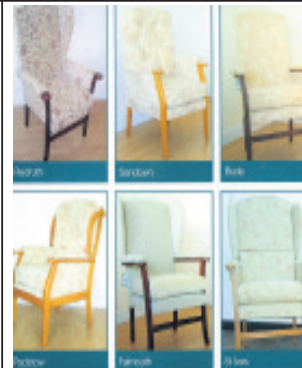
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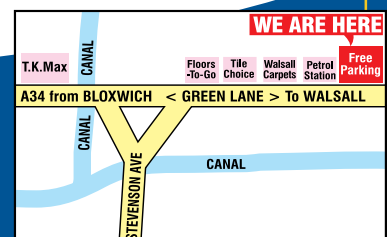
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Future of fields to be considered after tests

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The future of contaminated playing fields in Walsall will be considered within the next few weeks after the completion of fresh tests to determine their reopening for sports.

Ball games have been banned at Broadway West Playing Fields for more than seven years on health and safety grounds.

Cash to carry out more tests on the land was secured by Walsall Council at the end of last year. The results are now being analysed and are expected back inside the next few weeks, and a decision on use could be made before spring.

The site has continued to be used by dog walkers, despite sports being banned, after reassurance they were not at any immediate risk.

Pollution

Leisure and environment chief councillor Anthony Harris said: "Additional funding was identified to carry out extra soil tests on the playing fields in Broadway West. This was to check pollution levels in the soil but I would stress there is no immediate risk to people."

"Despite some delays caused by the icy weather the main sampling work and laboratory analysis has now been completed."

"These results now need to be scientifically assessed and we hope this will be completed in the next few weeks."

Council chiefs agreed to re-evaluate the health risks posed by the fields last year. Games were stopped in 2003 due to the discovery of dangerous metals.

Stopping sports came just five months after a cash windfall of £150,000 to develop pitches and facilities was received.

At least 10 sports clubs used the playing fields, including Walsall Star Cricket Club and Bescot Swifts Junior Football Club, and had to find alternative venues.

Obesity experts branded the move to keep the fields closed to ball games as "plain stupid" while parents have also been left bemused.

Vaughan is the elephant man



Mr England Vaughan Bailey helping to look after young elephant Ganesh Vijay.

Walsall's very own Mr England Vaughan Bailey has become something of an elephant man after being made an ambassador to a Midlands zoo.

Vaughan, who is the first black Mr England, has been made an ambassador for Twycross Zoo in Warwickshire.

The model and presenter, aged 23, took time out from his preparations for next month's Mr World contest in China to tour the zoo and meet one of its biggest attractions, Ganesh Vijay, Twycross's first baby elephant conceived by Artificial Insemination.

Vaughan helped feed the 15-month old youngster who already weighs more 45 stone, with treats of grapes and bananas and watched as the elephant keepers washed Vijay and the rest of the 5-strong herd before putting them through their daily training programme designed to

make it easier to give medical treatments.

"I'm really proud to be a Celebrity Ambassador for Twycross" said Vaughan, who recently won the Personality category at the Manhunt International event for the world's top male model in Taiwan.

"I've always been fascinated by animals but this was the first time I'd ever fed an elephant; it was a brilliant feeling. He's got the same birthday as me too."

Vaughan later met several of the zoo's other 'stars'. He is now spending hours in the gym and following a strict, low-carb diet in the run-up to the Mr World contest ("it helps define your abs").

He will also star in a Sky TV reality show called 'Hunks' next month and has received scores of lucrative modelling and TV offers plus a role in a gritty feature film in March.

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Nursery is outstanding



Lilly Cunison, aged 23 months, nursery nurse Jodie Ball and Harley Boden, 19 months, celebrate an outstanding Ofsted for Charlie Caterpillar's nursery

A nursery in Walsall has chalked up top marks following a recent Ofsted inspection.

Charlie Caterpillar's Day Nursery, in Leamore Lane, Bloxwich, received outstanding grades across the board following a visit from inspectors on December 7.

The nursery, which opened in 2002 and has 120 children aged from 12 weeks to 13 years, was praised for its exemplary leadership and management.

The report said staff were confident and have a well-developed knowledge of how children learn.

Inspector Adelaide Griffith said:

"Children in the early years foundation stage are making remarkable progress in this provision. Their learning and development are promoted extremely well. On the whole, children's welfare is extensively safeguarded."

"The self-evaluation process is embedded and continuous improvement is maintained because frequent reviews are carried out."

Nursery owner Joanne Morgan said: "It is a fantastic achievement for us. We have worked extremely hard over the eight years we have been open. We feel this is the start of our journey. To have this is a real credit. We now want to work hard to maintain and improve it."



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Ladder fall death was an accident

A window cleaner died after accidentally falling from a ladder while working at the home of a friend in Walsall, an inquest heard.

Married Brian Christopher Smith, aged 63, was found lying on the ground suffering from head injuries at the rear of the house in Scarborough Close, Pleck, on November 6 last year.

He died later that day at nearby Walsall Manor Hospital. The part-time window cleaner was alone at the property when tragedy struck.

In a statement read by coroner Mr Robin Balmain, family friend Sean Clarke told the hearing he had left Mr Smith

briefly. He said: "On the day in question he came to my house about 12.30pm or 1pm. He didn't look very well."

"He didn't say anything about feeling unwell and I didn't ask. He was cleaning the window and I left to go the shop."

He went on: "I was only gone for about ten minutes. When I got back I couldn't see him. I looked out the window and I saw something blue on the ground."

"I opened the back door and found him lying across the doorway."

Mr Smith's wife Rita, a school cleaner, told the hearing on the day of the fall he had left their home in nearby Flaxhall Street before she woke up.

She said since his death a relative had also told her he had not appeared well.

Mr Balmain told the hearing a post mortem revealed Mr Smith, a former employee at Rayburn Plastics, Whitehouse Street, Walsall had suffered a head injury as a result of the fall.

The post mortem also found underlying health issues.

Mr Balmain said no-one had witnessed the fall. He told Mrs Smith: "This is a very sad thing to have happened."

"The direct cause of your husband's death was clearly the head injury."

"The appropriate verdict for me to record is an accident."

Website idea wins an award

A Walsall entrepreneur has started 2011 with a bang by winning a national award for his new business.

Colin Beattie, aged 30, impressed judges in the Shell LiveWire grand ideas award with his business idea for an eBay-style auction site specifically for builders and home improvers in need of skips and scaffolding.

He has now been awarded £1,000 to further develop his idea.

Users of the site post their requirements and companies bid against each other to find the best deal.

Mr Beattie now plans to extend the service to offer everything from marquees to limos and even jet planes.

He said: "Currently there is no easy way for companies renting products to reach customers which also makes it hard for customers to find the best deal. We have designed a site to make rentals easy."

Jennifer has glimpses into the past

A DVD charting Walsall's history, which is shown at the town's museum, is now available to buy.

People can get copies of Walsall in Recorded Memory, which has been made by the Local History Centre.

The informative DVD looks back at the town and its rich industrial heritage and forms part of the museum's permanent exhibition, The Changing Face of Walsall.

It has been put together from the wealth of information and resources which are available at Walsall Local History Centre, in Essex Street.

Museum staff said the DVD had attracted a lot of interest from visitors, with many eager to get their hands on a copy.

Costing £5, the DVD is now in stock at the Lichfield Street museum. People can call in to get a copy.

Winter fashions from the 1920s to 1960s are currently on show at the museum. The museum is open on Tuesdays to Fridays from 10am to 5pm and on Saturdays from 10am to 4pm.



Walsall Museum's Jennifer Thompson with copies of Walsall in Recorded Memory

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More signing up to meals scheme

Around 120 people have signed up to a new meals on wheels service in Walsall, as hundreds of pensioners get used to a new way of receiving their daily food.

The Taste for Life scheme delivers hot or frozen meals to people's homes and in future will help some pensioners enjoy meals at luncheon clubs.

So far, 53 people have expressed an interest in attending clubs. The new system comes after Walsall Council's contract with provider Sodexo ended, as chiefs try to save £1 million over three years on the scheme.

Users of Taste for Life, run by Caldmore Housing Association, Age UK Walsall, Walsall Housing Regeneration Agency and other agencies, gave the service the thumbs-up.

Jean Evans, aged 83, who has hot meals cooked by Ic-are and delivered six days a week, said: "I've been really pleased with it. The drivers are very friendly and attentive. My dinner has always been the best meal of the day. As long as I've got a good dinner I'm happy."

Problems

"I've had no problems with the changeover at all. I think having a good meal every day and knowing it is going to come without any problems is a big weight off peoples' minds."

But she added the fact the council would no longer be subsidising the meals could make it tough for some people to cope. She currently pays £4.10 for her meal through Taste for Life.

"It could come very hard on some people as the new system could be a bit more expensive for them," she said. "It may only be a pound or so but that's quite a lot for some pensioners."

"But I must say, although I won't be doing it myself I think the luncheon clubs will be a great

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk



Trying the food are Jean Evans, aged 83, and Jill Green, from Taste for Life.

way for people to meet others," added Miss Evans, who spends one day a week at Little Bloxwich Day Hospice.

Forty people, including Miss Evans, have signed up for Taste for Life's Safe and Well scheme which offers welfare checks.

All 420 people who received meals on wheels under Sodexo were assessed.

Some people have made private arrangements with companies such as The Sandwich Box, in Wilenhall, while others have turned to family and friends.

The move is part of a raft of measures to save £65 million over three years.

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thechronicle

£9.5m college plans shown to the public

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk
Detailed plans for the country's first £9.5 million University Technical College (UTC) in Walsall have been unveiled at a public meeting.

The UTC, which will take over the site of doomed Sneyd Community School in Bloxwich and plans to open in September, will offer specialist and technical training for 14 to 19-year-olds.

A roadshow at the Vernon Way school last night launched the process for students across the Black Country to apply for a place - and 20 have already registered an interest.

Around 100 people turned up to hear plans for the UTC, which is Government-funded and will specialise in engineering and science, while also offering core subjects and apprenticeships.

A principal is expected to be appointed next week with a nationwide search for staff due to start by the end of the month. About two-thirds of the 40 posts available are expected to be teaching roles, with the remaining third made up of support staff.

Plans are yet to be finalised on the curriculum before designers can step in and transform the building.

Enrolling

A total of 240 students are expected to enrol this year, with around another 240 enrolling next year.

Employers will have a big impact on the curriculum and around 20 businesses have already pledged their support, from National Grid to Walsall-based Chamberlin and Hill.

Industry experts are expected to support teachers while postgraduates and undergraduates at Wolverhampton University will mentor students.

School days are expected to run from 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4pm on Fridays. Walsall College is the lead sponsor in the project and will be responsible for running the UTC along with co-sponsor Wolverhampton University.

Amarjit Basi, principal of Walsall College, said: "This will be a national first. It will be a kickstart for these type of schools to open across the country."

"It seeks to service the local community which extends across the Black Country. Our values will be to support children to be skilled and professional."

Tribute to Sister Dora



Archdeacon of Walsall the venerable Chris Simms



Mayor Councillor Gary Clarke at the service

Tributes were paid in memory of Walsall nursing heroine Sister Dora during an annual service in her adopted town.

Scores of people gathered at the weekend to remember the life and work of the inspirational figure during a service, procession and wreaths laying.

The tribute is usually held on the Sunday before her birthday - January 16, 1832 - and this year it happened to fall on the milestone date.

The legacy of Sister Dora was commemorated during a service of thanksgiving at The Crossing at St Paul's.

The congregation then walked to her statue on The Bridge.

Prayers were said and the laying of wreaths led by the mayoress Yvonne Clarke took place.

Among the 80 people gathered at the statue to pay tribute to Sister Dora was

49-year-old Sheila Lord, of Willenhall Road, Wolverhampton.

"She worked so tirelessly, and it is important the younger generation learn about the sacrifices she made," she said.

Walsall's mayor Councillor Gary Clarke also paid tribute.

"Sister Dora was such an inspirational figure, and her contribution to Walsall deserves to be remembered," he said.

"I think she would be very proud of the fact that her memory lives on today through the efforts of so many borough residents who are working hard to make a difference in their communities."

Sister Dora arrived in Walsall in 1865 and was adopted by townspeople following a series of disasters after which she nursed those in need and became known for her care and compassion.

She died in 1878 and in 1886 a statue was unveiled of her on The Bridge.

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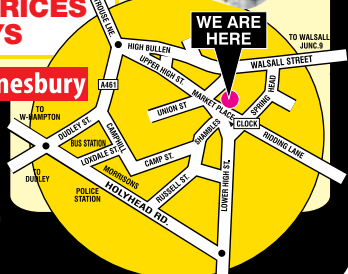
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Good start to the year for company



An engineer from Darlaston's Hydratight working on one of Shell's North Sea gas facilities in Scotland

Two major new North Sea gas and oil contracts and an industry safety award have kicked off a good start to the year for Darlaston-based engineering company Hydratight.

One is a four-year service and maintenance contract for three of Shell's major North Sea facilities.

Hydratight will handle maintenance and shutdown operations at Shell's St Fergus gas plant at Peterhead in Aberdeenshire, the Mossmorran fractionation plant at Cowdenbeath, Fife, and the Braefoot Bay marine gas terminal near Aberdeen.

It won a five-way tender to supply engineering services and machining work at the facilities, which bring natural gas and other liquids to the mainland from the North Sea.

Hydratight sales engineer John McKay said: "We were able to

show that our health and safety track record and leak-free start-up performance, technical ability and commercial compliance were second to none.

"We have worked with Shell for many years — 18 years at St Fergus — but always previously on a job by job basis. This is a welcome show of confidence in our abilities. We are proud to say we probably have the best technicians on the market for this kind of work."

Bolting

Hydratight's main role will be providing bolting and machining services during planned shutdowns, but the company will also run a six-hour callout service in emergencies.

The company has also signed £22 million deal with energy company Statoil to provide bolt-tensioning and other specialist maintenance services covering facilities both on the Norwegian continental shelf and onshore.

This is the first frame agreement — extended maintenance contract — for bolt tensioning Statoil has entered into and will run initially for three years, with two possible extensions of three years each.

Hydratight will be responsible for pipeline maintenance operations on and around major processing facilities at Mongstad near Bergen and Kårstø near Stavanger, and platforms in the Statfjord, Oseberg, Snorre, Kristin, Kviteseid, Visund, Njord and marginal fields — 60% of Statoil's Norwegian assets.

"We are delighted with the agreement, both for Statoil and for ourselves," said Hydratight Norway's business leader, Paul Harrison.

Meanwhile, Hydratight was awarded a coveted five-star safety management rating by the British Safety Council.

The company is now aiming for the BSC's elite Sword of Honour rating, awarded to only 40 organisations worldwide each year.

Special team in blitz on crimes

A special team of 11 officers has been put together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Walsall as part of a new force-wide crackdown which has been called Operation Intrusive.

It has been launched across the West Midlands and police in Walsall set out their aims for the three-month crackdown.

It will focus on burglary, vehicle crime, robbery, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.

The special team, made up of a police

sergeant and 10 constables, will target known offenders and carry out school truancy patrols.

Officers are set to use public transport in a bid to drive down the number of criminal incidents, while some will also use bikes to help patrol the borough's alleyways, subways and off-road areas.

The number of Neighbourhood Watch groups and voluntary groups is also set to be increased under the operation, which ends in March.

Addresses will be visited and residents

will be provided with specialist equipment including alarms and locks.

Some homes will have Smartwater packs delivered allowing them to mark valuables with a special code that can only be seen under ultra-violet light.

Traffic accident hotspots have been identified and automatic number plate recognitions are set to take place.

Anyone with information about criminal behaviour should contact police on 0345 113 500.

Church gets new minister

A church which runs family activity clubs for the community has welcomed a new minister after years without a permanent leader.

Rev Ruth Wood has taken over the reins at Delves Baptist Church.

Mrs Wood, aged 49, was previously at Gaer Baptist Church in Newport, Wales.

She is married to Alan, 50, a former aid manager for Samaritan's Purse International. They have two children.

Since the couple arrived in October they have wasted no time getting stuck into projects at the Bell Lane site.

Mrs Wood "The people are ever so friendly and have made us welcome."

Organ event

An organ recital will be held at Walsall Town Hall on February 2. Peter Morris will entertain an audience at the Lichfield Street venue with organ favourites and classic pieces from 1pm. Guests will include Jane Eminson on flute. Call 0845 111 2900.

Demi gets a new pet after shed blaze

A schoolgirl whose pets perished in a blaze had something to smile about after becoming the owner of a baby guinea pig.

Demileia Wood's three guinea pigs and rabbit died after the garden shed they lived in mysteriously caught fire.

Firefighters revived one of the guinea pigs, who was renamed Lucky because it managed to survive.

But the two-year-old pet succumbed to her injuries and died a week later after the fire on December 13.

Now after being treated by her family, 10-year-old Demileia, of Bagnall Street, Leamore, is now the proud owner of Holly, who has cheered the Christ Church CE School pupil up after her loss.

"When Lucky died my dad John and my uncle Andrew gave me some money to get a new pet," she said.

"She's got a cage all to herself and we're keeping her in the kitchen. I play with her all the time although I do miss Lucky and the others."



Demileia Wood with her new guinea pig called Holly.

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Marathon man Glyn's milestone



Glyn Marston

A fundraiser from Walsall has nudged his total over the £100,000 mark after years of pushing himself to the limit.

Glyn Marston, of New Invention, Willenhall, said he has just passed the milestone after more than a decade of helping charities.

He said it was a fantastic way to end 2010. Mr Marston, aged 48, reached the enormous sum by running more than 30 marathons and numerous ultra marathons of distances between 32 and 145 miles. He said he started running as a way to stop

smoking in 1993. "I quit smoking, but I found it difficult to stay off cigarettes and was getting cravings for nicotine," he said.

"I just thought 'I have got to do something now because I will start smoking again. Within 12 weeks I had run my first marathon.'"

The Robin Hood Marathon in Nottingham set father-of-two Mr Marston of Essington Road, on a path of constantly trying to better himself.

He ran the London to Brighton 55-mile road race

between 1998 and 2003, and the 145-mile Grand Union Canal race from Birmingham to London for five consecutive years from 2001.

He said: "I have always had a stubborn personality, and that's the ingredient you need."

But after his fifth 145-mile, he was devastated when doctors told him that there was no cartilage left in his knee at all.

A subsequent operation has not stopped Mr Marston's efforts, and he is still cycling and has completed wheelchair marathons since.

Hospice cyclists wanted

Cyclists are being asked to take part in a 90-mile bike ride for Walsall Hospice.

The hilly challenge will set off from Breathing Space, in Green Lane, Walsall, on April 3.

Cyclists will visit the Midland business networking organisation Gone Fishing 4 Business venues in Cannock, Derby and Branston before returning to Breathing Space via Walsall Hospice, Gosport. Visit www.walsallhospice.co.uk/challenge.

Roadshow for college

Roadshows will offer information on the forthcoming Walsall university technical college.

The specialist college is being created at the site of Sneyd Community School, in Bloxwich. The first event will be at Sneyd School, Vernon Way, on January 17 at 6.30pm.

Bridal fair date

A bridal fair will be held at Banks's Stadium, Walsall on March 2 between 6pm and 9pm.

Plaque honouring boxing club's founder Joe



Joe Wood with his grandson Jack, front right, and club manager Steven Kelly unveiling the plaque at Pleck Working Men's Club, Scarborough Road.

A memorial plaque has been mounted on the wall of a working men's club in Walsall in memory of the man who founded a boxing club.

Father-of-three Joe Wood, of Jerome Road, Walsall, a self-employed road building worker, died of cancer in 2002, aged 68.

He won 30 of 32 fights as a professional boxer and formed Pleck Amateur Boxing Club.

After forming the club more than 30 years ago, he coached for about 25 years before falling ill.

Charity

His son Joe Wood Jnr, 44, of Reservoir Street, Walsall, organised a charity event in October at Pleck Working Men's Club, in Scarborough Road.

The Elvis impersonator sang along with other entertainers and raised more than £600 for Cancer Research UK, with part of the cash going towards the special plaque in honour of his father.

Mr Wood Jnr, a father-of-four and former amateur boxer, said it was a fitting tribute for his father's contribution to the community. He said: "The charity night went great. We raised more than £600 and presented more than £500 to Cancer Research UK. They were more than pleased."

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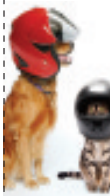
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THE GREEN HORNET FROM JAN 14

It's going to be another year for comic book heroes with The Green Lantern and Thor in the pipeline but the first of the bunch is The Green Hornet with Britt Reid played by Seth Rogen, as the son and heir to Los Angeles' largest newspaper fortune.

Just like Bruce Wayne aka Batman he is a rich, spoiled playboy who has been happy to drift through life doing whatever his fortune allows.

However, the death of his father James Reid played by Tom Wilkinson, brings Britt into contact with employee Kato, a role taken on by the late great Bruce Lee in the TV series but this time played by Jay Chou.

Their social consciences are collectively pricked and Kato builds The Black Beauty, the inevitable and indestructible car which no comic book hero should be without and as you would expect comes with every weapon imaginable. The twist this time comes as Britt decides that to be heroes, they will pose as villains.

Cameron Diaz adds the glamour as Reid's new secretary, Lenore Case and of course you can't have a hero without a nemesis, stand up Christopher Waltz as Mr Big, Benjamin Chudnofsky who has all the gangs under his power - cue the action.

Visit www.sonypictures.com/movies/the-greenhornet/

CONVICTION - THE TRUE STORY OF BETTY ANNE WATERS FROM JAN 14

This inspirational story stars Hilary Swank as Betty Anne who is devoted to her brother Kenny, played by Sam Rockwell who was sentenced to life for murder in the 1980s.

Convinced of his innocence Massachusetts mother and wife Betty sets about devoting her life to overturning the conviction.

She puts herself through high school, college and, finally, law school in an 18-year quest to free him. With the help of best friend Minnie Driver as Abra Rice she dissects the evidence and pushes herself and everyone around her to the limit to achieve her goal.

MORNING GLORY FROM JAN 21

In this romantic comedy Becky Fuller, Rachel McAdams, is a young producer who must save her TV show and her love life.

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However, she has a tough job on her hands when she's given the task of resuscitating a flagging breakfast TV show Daybreak, which has already eaten and spat out several seasoned producers.

Her first job is to bring on board the legendary but notoriously difficult, presenter Mike Pomeroy played by screen veteran Harrison Ford to work with self-important anchorwoman Colleen Peck played by another veteran Diane Keaton.

It's not hard to figure out that sparks start to fly and things go wrong, to add to her woes her personal life in the form of boyfriend Adam - Patrick Wilson - is heading for an iceberg.

Can she calm the storm between her bickering hosts, save the show and keep her boyfriend on board - there's only one way to find out.



BLACK SWAN FROM JAN 21

Nina played by Natalie Portman is a ballerina in a New York City company whose life is dance.

She lives with her retired ballerina mother Erica - Barbara Hershey - who is a driving force behind her daughter's professional ambition.

Dance director Thomas Leroy played by Vincent Cassel replaces prima ballerina Beth MacIntyre, Winona Ryder, for the opening production of their new season, Swan Lake and Nina is now his prima.

However, she has competition in the form of the new dancer, Lily, played by Mila Kunis, who impresses Leroy just as much.

The famous ballet requires the prima ballerina to play the White Swan with innocence and grace, and the Black with guile and sensuality.

Nina fits the White Swan perfectly but Lily is the personification of the Black Swan.

As the two young dancers' lives become entwined their rivalry morphs into a twisted friendship thus the central question of the film asks will Nina survive as she explores her dark side with a recklessness that threatens to destroy her.

Visit www.foxsearchlight.com/blackswan



THE MECHANIC FROM JAN 28

This remake of the 1970s Charles Bronson classic has Arthur Bishop played by Jason Statham who is the mechanic of the title - an assassin with a strict code and a unique talent for cleanly eliminating targets.

Bishop is the best there is, a professional perfectionist with total detachment.

But when his mentor and close friend Harry, Donald Sutherland, is murdered, Bishop shows human weakness.

He chooses his next assignment and wants those responsible eliminated.

However, Harry's son Steve played by Ben Foster complicates matters when he shows a determination to learn Bishop's trade. Bishop decides to take the student deep into his world and a deadly partnership is born.

But while in pursuit of their ultimate mark, deceptions threaten to surface and those hired to fix problems become problems themselves.

Visit www.themechanicmovie.com

TANGLED FROM JAN 28

Tangled is Disney's retelling of the Rapunzel fairytale.

Princess Rapunzel who is voiced by Mandy Moore, is a teenager with 70 feet of enchanted blonde hair who has been imprisoned in a tower by the witch Gothel who is given life by Donna Murphy.

As you can imagine homesick Rapunzel wants to head back to the kingdom of her childhood.

So when lovable rogue Flynn voiced by Zachary Levi takes refuge in the tower as well, she spies an opportunity.

She makes a pact with the thief and the pair become entangled in an adventure.

With her pet chameleon and a police-horse by her side, Rapunzel heads for home.

As you will no doubt expect this Disney animation comes with catchy songs, comic characters, plenty of action and of course loads of hair. It will be released in two and three D versions

Danny Farragher

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Trees showing their greenery in Merriion's Wood.

This week we have pictures from two enthusiastic snappers with three of the shots coming from Lin Groves of Park Hall and one snap from a regular contributor Les Cockayne of Bloxwich.



This view along the Rushall canal taken from Five Ways Bridge looking towards Gillyty Bridge.

Snapshots of life in the borough

Are you a snazzy snapper, a lord of the lens or diva of the digital print? Think you can do better than these pictures, if you can why not share your snaps of the borough?

There is no limit on the age or the subject all we ask is that they be as sharp and clear as possible and must be of reasonable quality for publication and of course feature some area or aspect of Walsall and its life.

Send them in with your name, address and contact number and a brief description of what the picture shows.

Also we would like to hear about any interesting tales or stories attached to the photograph. Send them in either as a hard copy or electronically and we will do the rest. So get those cameras snapping, dig out those dusty old albums and send them to: **Snappers Claim to Frame, Walsall Chronicle, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES** or email them to walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk.



A sunlit and rustic looking bench in the wood.



These grasses and reeds were snapped by Les Cockayne during a morning walk.

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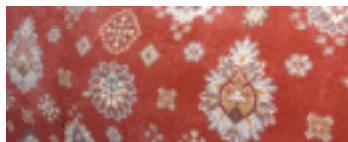
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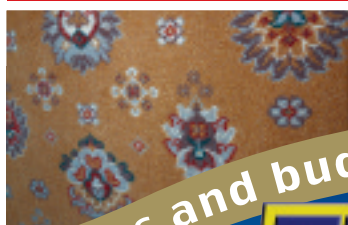
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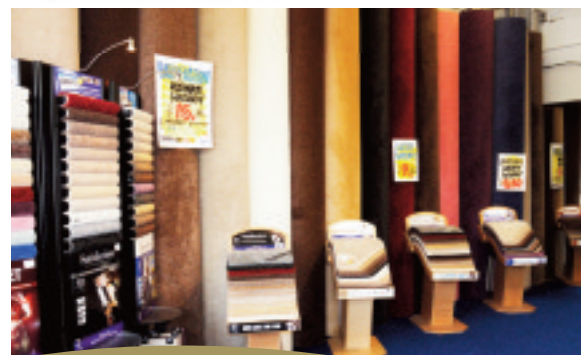
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the pulse

Multi-talented Elaine in concert as she turns another Paige



The Secret Sisters, Laura and Lydia Rogers – concert date

Sisters in Symphony

A PAIR of young sisters reviving the sounds of classic 1940s and 50s country music will be the special guest of singer/songwriter Ray LaMontagne when he appears with his Pariah Dogs at Birmingham Symphony Hall on February 20.

The Sunday night concert will feature The Secret Sisters, Laura and Lydia Rogers of Alabama, who recently recorded their debut album in Nashville with legendary pro-

ducers T Bone Burnett and Dave Cobb.

Their self-titled album combines harmonies on a selection of broken-hearted laments, honky tonk toe-tappers and easy listening standards.

The duo recently reached a wider audience with their performance on Jools Holland's Hootenanny.

Tickets for LaMontagne's concert are priced at £22.50 and £25.

AWARD-winning musical theatre star, multi-platinum recording artist and popular BBC Radio 2 presenter Elaine Paige, returns to the concert stage in 2011 including a performance at Birmingham Symphony Hall on March 7.

She has starred in numerous West End productions and on Broadway and in concert internationally, sweeping to fame with her performance as Eva Peron in Evita.

Shortly afterwards she created the role of Grizabella in the original production of Cats and the classic song Memory became one of the songs most closely associated with Elaine, pictured right.

Last November saw the release of her latest studio album, Elaine Paige & Friends.

Recorded in New York and produced by legendary record producer Phil Ramone for Rhino/Warner Bros Records, it features duets with 14 of her favourite musical performers.

Selection

These included, in alphabetical order: Paul Anka, John Barrowman, Michael Bolton, Kenny G, Barry Manilow, Johnny Mathis, Idina Menzel, Olivia Newton-John, Billy Ocean, Sinead O'Connor, LeAnn Rimes, Jon Secada, Neil Sedaka and Dionne Warwick.

The album entered the Top 20 in the UK and Elaine was awarded a gold disc for sales of more than 100,000 by the end of the year.

Her return to the concert stage with a new show will feature a selection of her favourite standards, her greatest hits and some of the modern classics from her new album.

Tickets are priced from £29.50 to £38.50 (with special packages including meeting the star after the show for £80) and are available from the box office on 0121 780 3333 or visit www.thsh.co.uk online.



The King's Speech review – page 36

YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE AND WEEK'S TV VIEWING



Theatre round-up – page 31



DVD review – page 36

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Audience to revel in Chess masterpiece

THERE'S more to Craig Revel Horwood than judging dancers on Strictly Come Dancing.

The director has won acclaim for his flamboyant touring revival of 80s West End musical Chess, a collaboration between Tim Rice and Abba's Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson.

The show, featuring former Wicked performer Shona White, was a hit in Wolverhampton last year and returns to the West Midlands for a run at Birmingham Hippodrome from February 7 to 12.

The show, about the duel between rival Russian and American chess grandmasters, features such songs as One Night in Bangkok, Pity The Child and the classic I Know Him So Well.

Tickets are priced from £13.50 to £37.50, available online at www.birminghamhippodrome.com or by calling 0844 338 5000.



Shona White takes centre stage in Craig Revel Horwood's revival of Chess, which is returning to the West Midlands with a run at Birmingham Hippodrome

Cantankerous Tom will soften your heart From Cornish shanties to Definite Diva songs

WARTIME weepy Goodnight Mister Tom is being brought to the stage at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre next month.

The play is an adaptation of Michelle Magorian's hugely popular children's novel about how a young London evacuee with a sad secret forges a friendship with his cantankerous old host, the titular Mister Tom, in a rural community.

Playing Mister Tom, a role associated with the late John Thaw from a popular TV film version, is Royal Shakespeare

Company actor Oliver Ford Davies, who will be familiar to fans of the blockbuster Star Wars movies as Sio Bibble in The Phantom Menace, Attack of the Clones and Revenge of the Sith.

Goodnight Mister Tom is staged at the Grand nightly from February 8 to 12 with matinees on the Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Tickets are priced from £6.50 to £22.50. Contact the box office on 01902 429212 or at www.grandtheatre.co.uk

CORNISH harmonies as smooth as clotted cream will be heard at Birmingham Town Hall on Tuesday, January 25, when Port Isaac's Fisherman's Friends will be in concert with songs and sea shanties from the North Cornwall fishing village (tickets £17.50).

Other forthcoming musical highlights in the city include on Thursday, January 27, a lunchtime recital by Ji Liu, winner of the Brant Piano Competition, performing Bach's Goldberg Variations (Town Hall,

£7.50); on the same day, just over an hour later at 2.15pm, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra bring spring to the city early with a performance of Beethoven and Schumann's Spring Symphonies (Symphony Hall, £9.50-£35).

On January 28, the CBSO present showbiz and pop favourites at the hall with Definite Divas - Mary Carewe, Grainne Renihan and Emer McParland. Tickets cost £9.50 to £39.50. Call 0121 780 3333 or visit www.thsh.co.uk

COMPETITION



Music memories are just the ticket

DIRECT from the USA and celebrating 50 years of number one Motown hits, the Magic of Motown tribute concert show is heading for Wolverhampton. It is due to book into the Grand Theatre on Saturday, February 5 and the Chronicles have teamed up with the promoters to offer eight readers the chance to win free tickets and extras. The prize will consist of a pair of tickets, DVD, CD and programme for the 5pm performance. The ticket price is £19.50 and there is a later performance at 8pm (£21.50).

The record label that brought the likes of the Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes, the Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, the Jackson 5, Marvin Gaye, Lionel Richie, Martha Reeves, Smokey Robinson, Mary Wells and the Isley Brothers to the world enjoyed its first number one hit in 1961. Please Mr Postman by the Marvelettes was followed by a phenomenal 56 other Billboard chart toppers.

To enter, answer this simple question: In which American city was the Motown label based?

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and daytime phone number to: Motown Competition, Chronicles (Editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: January 27.

Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final. There is no cash alternative. To buy tickets contact the box office: 01902 429212 <http://www.grandtheatre.co.uk>



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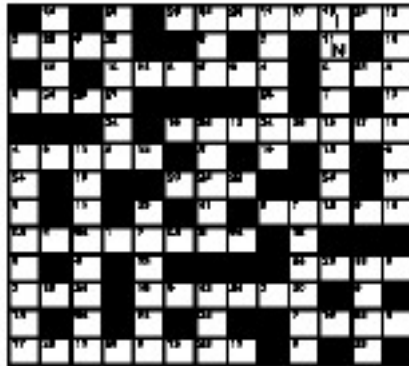
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

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Double Crossword

Clues are in quick crossword form - both
in the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

2. Aural device sort of
position creating
(10)
6. A little step
into something (4)
9. Happened and
disappeared when
solving this clue (4)
10. Not for the faint heart
(10)
12. Member of the West
Hobbit (10)
13. The only way on
go (about the clock)
(10)
16. People may have
a reputation for
being (10)
18. Youngest member
of the family (4)
20. Product of a hard
heart (10)
22. Common in
nature (10)

Down

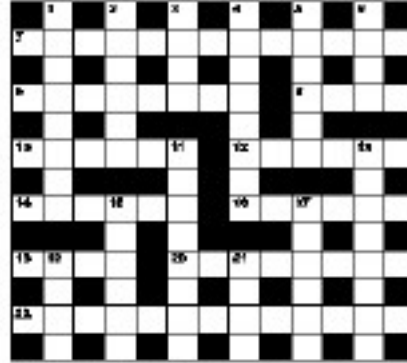
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20. Product of a hard
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22. Common in
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Down

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(10)
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6. A little step
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being (10)
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of the family (4)
20. Product of a hard
heart (10)
22. Common in
nature (10)



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

DOWN: 1. The only way on go (about the clock) (10) 2. Aural device sort of position creating (10) 6. A little step into something (4) 9. Happened and disappeared when solving this clue (4) 10. Not for the faint heart (10) 12. Member of the West Hobbit (10) 13. The only way on go (about the clock) (10) 16. People may have a reputation for being (10) 18. Youngest member of the family (4) 20. Product of a hard heart (10) 22. Common in nature (10)

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Circigram

Replay the question mark with a letter
so that the letter at the end of the
word can be changed to form another
common word. What was the first
letter, and in which position, of the
question mark?

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
The letter
was changed to
the letter
in the word
and in the
position of the
question mark.

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Colin Firth is outstanding as the star of the King's Speech



Colin Firth delivers the performance of his life

Tears and laughter in Colin's crowning glory

THE KING'S SPEECH (12A)

The British are coming!" famously declared screenwriter Colin Welland in 1982 when he collected his Oscar for Chariots Of Fire.

Nearly 30 years later, his prophecy seems to be coming true.

Slumdog Millionaire was the toast of Tinseltown in 2008, garnering almost every trophy in sight, and now The King's Speech is poised to do the same, and win Colin Firth a well-deserved Academy Award into the bargain.

Last year, the British actor was cruelly denied a golden statuette for his revelatory performance as a suicidal gay lecturer in Tom Ford's directorial debut, A Single Man.

This year, he should definitely practise his self-deprecating acceptance speech for this heartrending portrayal of King George VI in Tom Hooper's majestic comedy drama. On Sunday he picked up the Golden Globe for best actor in the awards given by Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which are seen as a good indicator for the Oscars.

Firth is matched laugh for laugh by Geof-

Cinema

frey Rush in imperious form, and the cream of homegrown acting talent provides illustrious support, including Timothy Spall as Winston Churchill.

The King's Speech is an impeccably crafted chapter from recent British history that charts a remarkable and unlikely friendship between two men from opposite sides of the class divide.

When King George V (Gambon) dies in 1936, eldest son Edward (Pearce) ascends to the throne, but his reign is shrouded in scandal as he continues to romance American divorcee, Wallis Simpson (Best).

Love triumphs over duty and Edward abdicates, forcing youngest son Albert (Firth) into the spotlight.

However, the newly crowned King George VI suffers from a crippling stammer, which renders him unable to deliver public addresses.

With war imminent and the country looking to its King for leadership, Queen Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter) approaches unconventional Australian-born speech therapist Lionel Logue (Rush) on the recommendation of a friend.

"She said your antipodean methods were

both unconventional and controversial. Those are two of my favourite words," smiles Elizabeth, persuading Lionel to help her husband overcome his fears.

The King's Speech is a crowd-pleasing, heart-tugging gem, seen through the eyes of a man who is frightened to say a word for fear of what might – or might not – come out.

David Seidler's script elegantly dissects the relationship between monarch and commoner, creating memorable exchanges that provide the film with huge laughs and a strong emotional heartbeat.

Firth delivers the performance of his life, battling valiantly against his condition, while Rush is hysterical as the linguist who refuses any concessions to his king.

"My castle, my rules," he maintains.

"Their double-act is glorious, including an unforgettable barrage of expletives in the name of therapy.

"Do you know the f word?" asks Lionel.

"F... f... fornication?" replies Albert nervously.

The finale is guaranteed to have audiences cheering and sobbing with joy.

If The King's Speech is a sign of things to come in 2011 then it will be a very, very happy new year.

DVD

Old Celtic magic brings horror into 21st century

OUTCAST – CERT 18

Outcast is a wannabe horror film which draws on ancient Celtic tradition and is set among the modern landscape of a bleak high rise estate somewhere in Edinburgh.

The plot centres around a mysterious mother and son who move into one of the flats and are on the run from a deadly pursuer Cathal, played by a bearded James Nesbitt.

Using an ancient form of magic to keep themselves hidden from their hunter, Irish travellers Mary, played by Kate Dickie and her teenage son, Fergal – Niall Bruton, wind up in the dingy flat.

It seems their only neighbour is a family which includes the streetwise and pretty Petronella, a Scottish/Romany girl played by Hanna Stanbridge who befriends Fergal and finds him an oasis in



the tangle of her life coping with her retarded brother and alcoholic mother.

Mary is extremely protective of her son and for good reason, for they hide a secret which when unleashed leaves a trail of dead bodies. She is dedicated to keeping her son out of the clutches of Cathal but now has the added complication of keeping him away from any romantic entanglement with Petronella.

Cathal using his own style of dark magic to hunt his quarry creating panic for Mary and her son as she discovers he is closing in.



Above Niall Bruton as Fergal with Hanna Stanbridge as Petronella.



Left Cathal, James Nesbitt, uses ancient ritual to hunt his prey.

Problems

Using her own blood and protective symbols around their new home Mary uses all her witch-like powers to keep prying eyes away and to avoid the inevitable showdown with their Van Helsing-style hunter.

One of the problems with this film is it never seems sure of what it is, it's not gory enough and takes itself too seriously to be a slasher movie.

It isn't really scary enough to be a full-blown horror film and doesn't really have enough special effects to be a sci-fi movie.

There are, as you can imagine, the set pieces of the minor characters wondering around the dark concrete landscape just

waiting to be attacked.

You have to give it to director Colm McCarthy he does create a menacing arena with his shots of the bleak urban surroundings in which the characters dwell. However, Nesbitt is never fully convincing as the brooding hunter protected by the ancient symbols tattooed into his flesh as he goes on his quest.

He even comes over as a little incompetent as the one thing he is told about leaving a trail he forgets almost immediately.

Outcast doesn't really have the jump factor as a horror film and never really builds the tension high enough to keep you on the edge of your seat.

Outcast out on DVD January 17
Danny Farragher



RFC THE THAW CONTINUES... "VAT PRICES HELD"

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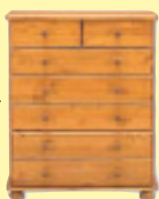


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RFC

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The top property guide for Walsall, Brownhills, Aldridge, Willenhall and Bloxwich

Five-bed home has plenty of character

Hunters estate agent in Sutton Coldfield is managing the sale of this delightful period house located at 71 Borneo Street in Walsall and is inviting offers in the region of £285,000.

Approach to the house is via a driveway with off-road parking and steps leading to the entrance with further access to the hall.

Here there is a tiled floor, ceiling arch, radiator and door into a further inner hall where stairs lead to the first floor.

The hallway includes a shower room with WC, wash basin, shower cubicle, storage cupboard and double-glazed window.

With dimensions of 14ft 7in x 15ft, the lounge features a real fuel fireplace, coving and ceiling rose while the sitting room has two sash windows, fireplace with coal-effect gas fire, radiator, coving and ceiling rose.

Accessed via the lobby, the kitchen and dining area measures 23ft 10in x 9ft 9in and includes a range of cupboards, granite work-surfaces, sink unit, double oven and grill, microwave, five-ring gas hob with extractor

hood, dishwasher and radiator. There is also space for a table, double-glazed windows to the side, access to a utility and double doors opening to the garden.

Plumbing for a washing machine is provided in the utility where there are further work-surfaces, a sink unit and housing for the gas central heating boiler.

Once upstairs, a further set of steps lead to the second floor where there is a bedroom with sloping roof, linen cupboard and WC.

Obscure

The first floor landing has four further bedrooms with double-glazed windows and bathroom comprising a modern suite with WC, wash basin, bath with shower and obscure double-glazed window. Outside, the grounds of the residence include a garage which measures 16ft 11in x 18ft 3in and a garden room with heating and water tap.

The vendor advises that further planning permission has also been granted for the site. The rear garden is one of the main features of the residence with a block-paved patio, lawn and mature shrubs and trees.

For further information visit the website at www.huntersgroup.co.uk or call 0121 355 0555 to arrange a viewing.



This period home has five bedrooms split over two floors, a fuel-burning fireplace and stylish fittings.



There is a range of high quality units and integrated appliances in the kitchen

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WEDNESBURY COLLINS ROAD

This traditional-style three bedroom semi detached home occupies a generous corner plot and provides extremely well presented accommodation with potential for future extension (subject to Local Authority planning permission).
£144,950



WEDNESBURY PEMBERTON CRESCENT

With double glazing and combination heating throughout this three bedroom detached property is offered for sale with no upward chain and is competitively priced for a quick sale.
£132,500



WEDNESBURY RYDERS CHAMBERS, SPRING HEAD

Freehold building for sale. Attractive facade. Centrally located in town centre and parking. Four ground floor rooms, three of good proportion. Two first floor rooms. Ground and first floor w/c/s. Combination central heating. Vacant possession. Suit a variety of uses.
£79,950



DARLASTON WAVERLEY ROAD

Situated in a popular road, close to the amenities of Darlaston town centre, this spacious traditional-style mid terrace property has central heating and double glazing and offers potential for further improvement...
£89,950



MOXLEY, WEDNESBURY HUGHES ROAD

This large three bedroom semi detached property benefits from two reception rooms, Economy 7 heating and double glazing, a large kitchen, a garage and if offered for sale with no upward chain.
£92,250



WEDNESBURY ST. PETER CROFT

Situated in a quiet cul de sac on a larger than average plot, this modern-style semi detached home offers accommodation of generous proportions and is covered by the remainder of the builders NHBC guarantee.
£139,950



WEDNESBURY WINDMILL STREET

★ Superbly presented mid terrace house
★ Two bedrooms
★ Contemporary kitchen and bathroom
★ Two reception rooms
★ Enclosed rear garden
★ Sumptuous first floor bathroom
★ Ideal for first time buyers
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£104,950



WEDNESBURY DARBY ROAD

★ Semi detached house
★ Ideal first time purchase
★ Two bedrooms
★ Recently fitted kitchen
★ Re-fitted first floor bathroom
★ Private enclosed rear garden
★ Off road parking to the fore
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£117,500



Darlaston Cash Joynson Avenue

Situated in Darlaston, convenient for schools, bus routes and shopping facilities, this three bedroom and terrace property offers great value for first time buyers or investment purposes. The property benefits from a coordinating central heating system and briefly comprises of: Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining Kitchen, ground floor Bathroom, Garden and garage facility.
£75,000



WEDNESBURY HOLDEN ROAD

★ Very large semi detached property
★ Situated in popular location
★ Three double bedrooms
★ Two reception rooms
★ Lovely large garden
★ Large garage to the fore.
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£134,950 reduced for quick sale



WEST BROMWICH 17 LEACROFT GROVE

Enjoying a private aspect to the rear garden and boasting generous bedrooms, this property is offered for sale with no upward chain and is considered ideal for the family buyer. REDUCED FOR A QUICK SALE - MUST BE VIEWED
£120,000



WEDNESBURY HOLLY ROAD

This traditional style two bedroom semi detached property is situated in a popular cul de sac off Holden Road North and is offered for sale with no upward chain. Thought ideal for young professionals, being ideally located for access to the motorway network at Junction 9 of M6. The accommodation benefits from majority central heating and double glazing.
£124,000



WEDNESBURY CRANKHALL LANE

This semi detached property in an established location in Wednesbury comprises; three well proportioned bedrooms, verandah, lounge and breakfast kitchen the property is considered ideal for first time buyers.
£99,950



Darlaston Broadwaters Road

A very well presented TWO BEDROOMED SEMI-DETACHED residence on a larger than average plot offering potential for further extension subject to necessary planning approval. The property is considered ideal for a first time buyer and having very access to the centre of Darlaston, Willenhall and Wednesbury, with the Motorway network nearby for commuting to Birmingham. The property is well served by local amenities including schools for children of all ages.
£94,950



WEDNESBURY VICARAGE ROAD

Situated in a very popular road, close to Wednesbury town centre, this well appointed traditional-style mid terrace property must be viewed internally to be fully appreciated. Being competitively priced for a quick sale, the accommodation includes two reception rooms, two bedrooms plus attic room - fantastic value.
£94,950



Moxley Curtin Drive

Situated in the Moxley area of Wednesbury, convenient for the Black Country Route, this and terrace property offers great value for money. Having double glazing and no chain, viewing via the agent is recommended or the accommodation which briefly comprises of: Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Dining Room, Covered side entrance, three bedrooms, en-suite bathroom, private enclosed rear garden and off road parking to the fore.
£90,000

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Darlaston Heathfield Lane West

Having the benefit of central heating and double glazing, this traditional semi would be ideal for first time buyers looking for a home in which to grow. Whilst the establishment area of popular local schools and close to Darlaston town centre and transport links to Wolverhampton.
£89,950



DARLASTON FORGE ROAD

This semi detached house is in an established location of Darlaston is close to local amenities and schools. With two good size bedrooms and two reception rooms the property is ideal for a first time buyer or for investment purposes.
£89,950



DARLASTON RICHARDS STREET

★ Traditional mid terrace house
★ Three bedrooms
★ Two reception rooms
★ Double glazed and centrally heated
★ Rear garden
★ Vacant possession
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office
£79,950



DARLASTON HALL STREET

THIS MODERN TWO BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT IS OFFERED FOR SALE WITH NO UPWARD CHAIN, WITH ECONOMY 7 ELECTRIC HEATING AND DOUBLE GLAZING THE PROPERTY IS CLOSE TO ALL AMENITIES AND INCLUDES PRIVATE PARKING TO THE REAR.
£67,500

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WANTED

Mrs G wants a three bedroom semi in New Invention, Short Heath or Summer Hayes. She has sold and can pay up to £135,000. Ref: RB

NEW

SUMMER HAYES, WILLENHALL BUTE CLOSE

- * A well maintained extended dormer style semi detached
- * Double glazed windows
- * Lounge and dining room
- * Extended kitchen
- * Three bedrooms
- * Garage and off road parking
- * Gas central heating
- * Call to see position

£142,500 OFFERS, VIEWING ESSENTIAL

WANTED

Mrs B is looking for a three bedroom property in the County Bridge area, she can proceed straight away. Price guide up to £120,000. Ref: NW

NEW

REEDSWOOD ROCHESTER CROFT

- * Superbly appointed modern three bedroom semi
- * Extended bath and first floor levels
- * Garage with ample parking & double garage
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Excellent fitted kitchen in selected appliances
- * Extended lounge with adjacent study & utility room
- * Spacious rear garden with timber decked patio
- * Heating double central

£134,950

WANTED

Mr & Mrs B urgently require a four bedroom detached property in Essington. They have sold their own property. Price guide up to £275,000. Ref: NW

NEW

WILLENHALL NOOSE LANE

- * Three bedroom and town house style property
- * Gas warm air central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * Rear garage
- * Lounge and dining kitchen
- * Downstairs WC
- * Internal viewing recommended
- * Ideal first time buy or buy to let

£79,950 No Chain

WANTED

Miss K is looking for a three bedroom property in the Summer Hayes/Pool Hayes area. Price guide up to £160,000. She has sold her own property. Ref: EJ

NEW

SHORT HEATH WOODSIDE WAY

- * Semi detached bungalow in popular woodland development
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * 18ft front lounge
- * Garage and ample off road parking
- * Pleasant garden with woodland rear aspect
- * No onward chain

£124,950 OFFERS

WANTED

Miss S urgently wants a three or four bedroom detached in Coppice Farm. She has no chain and can proceed immediately. Price guide up to £200,000. Ref: NW

NEW

WILLENHALL HILL ROAD

- * Traditional style semi and town house
- * Three bedrooms
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Upstairs shower room
- * Fitted kitchen with selected appliances
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * Block paved driveway

£104,995 OFFERS

WANTED

Mr W wants an investment property in need of modernisation. Price guide £50,000-£90,000. He is able to complete quickly. Ref: NW

NEW

WILLENHALL VAUGHAN ROAD

- * Much improved modern house style
- * Refitted kitchen and bathroom
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * Superb uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Black paved driveway
- * Viewing essential

£109,950

WANTED

Mr H & Miss W are looking for a two or three bedroom property near to Pool Hayes school, they have nothing to sell. Price guide maximum £110,000. Ref: BJ

NEW

NEW INVENTION, WILLENHALL SANDRINGHAM AVENUE

- * Traditional extended three bedroom semi
- * Popular location off Lichfield Road
- * Two reception rooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazing
- * Extended lounge and kitchen
- * Separate WC
- * Early wall insulation, burglar alarm
- * Garage and off road parking
- * Pleasant rear garden with local park to the rear

£129,950 OFFERS

WANTED

Miss G is looking for a three bedroom property in the Short Heath area, she is a first time buyer with a price guide up to £100,000. Ref: BJ

NEW

WILLENHALL ALVINGTON CLOSE, OFF STROUD AVENUE

- * Well presented semi-detached
- * 18ft rear lounge/dining room
- * property in popular location
- * Separate dining room/playroom
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows
- * Black gravel driveway
- * Pleasant rear garden

£126,500 Viewing Recommended

NEW

WILLENHALL PINSON ROAD

- * Pleasantly appointed semi in convenient location
- * Three bedrooms
- * Two reception rooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows
- * Superb uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Refitted kitchen and bathroom
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * Black paved driveway
- * Viewing essential

£99,995 Internal Viewing Recommended

NEW

WILLENHALL LONGWOOD RISE

- * Semi detached property on generous corner plot
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Lounge and fitted dining kitchen
- * Upstairs shower room
- * Garage and ample off road parking for several vehicles
- * Pleasant garden to front and rear

£139,995 OFFERS - Viewing Recommended

NEW

SHORT HEATH COLTHAM ROAD

- * Charming Victorian style terraced property
- * Completely refurbished to a high standard
- * Two reception rooms
- * Three bedrooms including loft room
- * Two reception rooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Separate WC
- * 18ft fitted kitchen including oven and hob
- * Downstairs and upstairs with WC
- * No onward chain

£99,950 Internal Viewing Essential

JAN SALE

BENTLEY, WALSALL WREXHAM AVENUE

- * Spacious traditional style semi
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazing
- * Two reception rooms
- * Upstairs bathroom
- * Pleasant gardens
- * No upward chain

WAS £84,950 NOW £79,995

JAN SALE

WILLENHALL SUMMER SALE RAVENSBOROUGH GROVE

- * Well presented semi-detached
- * 18ft rear lounge/dining room
- * property in popular location
- * Separate dining room/playroom
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows
- * Black gravel driveway
- * Pleasant rear garden

WAS £97,500 NOW £94,995

JAN SALE

SHORT HEATH, WILLENHALL COLTHAM ROAD

- * Pleasantly appointed traditional style terraced property
- * Popular Short Heath location
- * Two bedrooms, one with wardrobe
- * Upstairs bathroom with shower
- * Two reception rooms
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Gas central heating
- * Double glazed windows

WAS £89,950 NOW £84,995



WILLENHALL LONGWOOD RISE

- * Semi detached property on generous corner plot
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazed windows
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Lounge and fitted dining kitchen
- * Upstairs shower room
- * Garage and ample off road parking for several vehicles
- * Pleasant garden to front and rear

£139,995 OFFERS - Viewing Recommended

JAN SALE

SUMMER HAYES WILLENHALL WOBURN AVENUE

- * Attractively appointed detached house
- * Popular Summer Hayes location
- * Call to see position
- * Two bedrooms (optional to convert to three)
- * Gas central heating
- * Double glazing
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Garage and ample off road parking

WAS £184,950 NOW £176,500

JAN SALE

NEW INVENTION, WILLENHALL SANDLAND ROAD

- * Spacious traditional style semi
- * Three bedrooms
- * Lounge and dining room
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazing
- * Upstairs bathroom with shower
- * Large rear garden
- * Internal viewing recommended

WAS £109,500 NOW £102,000

JAN SALE

WILLENHALL CROXLEY GARDENS

- * Pleasantly appointed improved modern style semi in popular location
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Bathed dining kitchen with appliances
- * Bathed with electric shower
- * Utility room
- * Garage and black gravel driveway

WAS £119,995 NOW £117,995

JAN SALE

WILLENHALL BIRCHFIELDS ROAD

- * Detached bungalow in delightful location off Broad Lane South
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * 20ft front lounge/dining room
- * Bathrooms with shower
- * Integral garage
- * Pleasant gardens

WAS £174,950 NOW £173,500

JAN SALE

WILLENHALL LINCOLN AVENUE

- * Spacious much improved semi-detached property
- * Three bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * Two reception rooms
- * Upstairs bathroom with shower
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Pleasant gardens

WAS £135,995 NOW £127,950

JAN SALE

WILLENHALL SANDLAND ROAD

- * Top floor two bedrooms for conversion to three
- * Gas central heating system
- * uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Bathrooms with shower
- * Security intercom system
- * Large rear garden
- * Internal viewing recommended

WAS £69,950 NOW £64,950

JAN SALE

WILLENHALL SANDLAND ROAD

- * Top floor two bedrooms for conversion to three
- * Gas central heating system
- * uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Bathrooms with shower
- * Security intercom system
- * Large rear garden
- * Internal viewing recommended

WAS £69,950 NOW £64,950

JAN SALE

SHORT HEATH WOODSIDE WAY

- * Pleasantly appointed semi in popular location
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Bathed dining kitchen with appliances
- * Bathed with electric shower
- * Utility room
- * Garage and black gravel driveway

WAS £129,995 NOW £124,995

JAN SALE

NEW INVENTION, WILLENHALL LICHFIELD ROAD

- * Delightful extended detached bungalow
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Bathed dining kitchen with appliances
- * Bathed with electric shower
- * Utility room
- * Garage and carport
- * Pleasant gardens

WAS £210,000 NOW £199,950

JAN SALE

NEW INVENTION LICHFIELD ROAD

- * Carefully improved three-bedroom detached property
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazed windows
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Bathed dining kitchen with appliances
- * Bathed with electric shower
- * Utility room
- * Garage and carport
- * Pleasant gardens

WAS £184,950 NOW £179,950

JAN SALE

SHORT HEATH, WILLENHALL WALKERS FOLD

- * Much improved modern style semi
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating, uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Bathed dining kitchen with appliances
- * Bathed with electric shower
- * Utility room
- * Garage and carport
- * Pleasant gardens

WAS £124,995 NOW £119,995

JAN SALE

WILLENHALL ST ANNAS ROAD

- * Pleasantly appointed modern style semi
- * Two bedrooms
- * Gas central heating
- * uPVC double glazing
- * uPVC double glazed conservatory
- * Fitted kitchen inc. oven and hob
- * Bathed dining kitchen with appliances
- * Bathed with electric shower
- * Utility room
- * Garage and carport
- * Pleasant gardens

WAS £94,995 NOW £89,995

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Walsall
Wolverhampton Road, NEW

Awaiting Picture

BUILDING PLOT OPEN TO OFFERS A rare opportunity to purchase a plot of land in a cul de sac with planning permission for a luxurious 3 bedroom detached family home (with luxurious detached home either side) with off road parking at the front and the rear. To view plans and drawings contact the Willenhall office.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£59,995**

Willenhall
Granville Street, Willenhall REDUCED



*** INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY *** LAND FOR SALE
*** PLANNING PERMISSION FOR 4 X TWO BEDROOM APARTMENTS *** CLOSE TO WILLENHALL TOWN ***
OPEN TO OFFERS *** MUST BE SOLD ***
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£89,995**

Darlaston
Station Street, Darlaston REDUCED



• A Period 2 Bedroom Mid Terrace Home
• Well Positioned for both Walsall & Darlaston Town Centres
• Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (where specified)
• Lounge
OFFERS IN EXCESS OF: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£72,000**

Darlaston
Allen Drive, Darlaston REDUCED



• A Recently Refurbished Mid Residence
• Gas Centrally Heated
• Double Glazed (as specified)
• Quiet Cul-de-Sac Location
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£84,950**

Wolverhampton
Davenport Road, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton



A three bedroom middle terrace family home having the benefit of cavity wall and loft insulation. UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This good sized property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, separate dining room, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens and off road parking.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£94,995**

Willenhall
Tyler Road, Willenhall



A well-maintained three-bedroom and terrace family home benefiting from newly fitted carpets, fitted kitchen, gas double glazing and gas central heating. Located close to the Black Country Road and the M6, the property briefly comprises, reception, lounge with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen, driveway, three bedrooms, bathroom, enclosed rear garden, paved driveway, paved parking to rear and side and front garden with mature trees and shrubs.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£96,000**

Lowes Avenue, Darlaston



Refurbished, improved and upgraded, three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. Ideal for a young family the property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens with paved WC and off road parking. MUST BE VIEWED. VIRTUAL TOUR AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£79,995**

Darlaston
Whitton Street, Darlaston



• A 3 Bedroom End Terrace Home
• Gas Central Heating
• Double Glazing (where specified)
• Lounge
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£84,995**

Darlaston
King Edward Street, Darlaston



• Period 2 Bedroom (and a loft room) Semi Detached Home
• Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing
• Lounge with Feature Fireplace
• Dining Room
OFFERS INVITED: Viewing: 0121 505 3533

Darlaston
Willenhall Street, Darlaston



• A Deceptively Spacious 2 Bedroom Semi Detached
• Gas Central Heating
• Double Glazing (where specified)
• Excellent Local Amenities
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£114,995**

Willenhall
Harry Perks Street, Willenhall



• OPEN TO OFFERS • Spacious and terraced residence which benefits from no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. Briefly comprising: Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Rear Lobby, Guest W.C., 3 Bedrooms, Bathroom, Front Garden, Off Road Parking for several cars, Good Size Rear Garden & Garage.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£77,950**

Willenhall
Harrowby Place, Willenhall REDUCED



An extended 3 bedroom traditional semi-detached family home benefiting from gas central heating & UPVC double glazing. Further comprising, porch, reception hall, lounge, dining room, extended L-shaped kitchen, family bathroom, rear garden, off road parking and garage. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£100,000**

Willenhall
Leacroft, New Invention, Willenhall



A 3 bedroom detached family home benefiting from quiet cul-de-sac location, gas central heating & UPVC double glazing. This well-maintained property briefly comprises, reception hall, through lounge/diner with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen, side covered entrance, three bedrooms, bathroom with shower and front and rear gardens. VIRTUAL TOUR AVAILABLE ONLINE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£89,995**

Walsall
Almond Avenue, Bentley REDUCED



An upgraded and refurbished three-bedroom middle floor flat having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This spacious property further comprises, reception hall, lounge with balcony, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom 3 currently used as dining room, fitted bathroom and communal gardens and parking. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£81,995**

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2011 INSTRUCT US IN JANUARY FOR
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AND WEDNESFIELD AREAS**
CALL NOW FOR FREE VALUATION

Willenhall
Vaughan Road, Willenhall REDUCED



Well presented middle terrace residence which benefits from UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. Briefly comprising porch, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, conservatory, two bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom, front driveway and rear garden.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£109,999**

Willenhall
Bure Grove, Riverpoint, Willenhall



A well-presented two-bedroom middle terrace property having the benefit of double glazing and gas central heating. Located in a pleasant cul-de-sac on the sought after Riverpoint estate this attractive property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms (master with en-suite shower room), family bathroom, rear garden and off road parking.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£107,500**

Willenhall
Hawkswell Drive, Hadley Heath, Willenhall



A well-presented, extended and improved two-bedroom semi-detached home on the popular Hadley Heath estate and having the benefit of no upward chain. UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. This splendid property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, study, patio, rear garden, two bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, off road parking.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£119,995**

Willenhall
Taverners Close, Willenhall



A well-maintained modern 2 bedroom semi-detached home having the benefit of gas central heating, double glazing and no upward chain. Located in a cul-de-sac this splendid property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, front and rear gardens, garage and off road parking.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£127,995**

Darlaston
Eldon Street, Darlaston



A secluded 3 bedroom detached bungalow having the benefit of no upward chain, electric central heating and part double glazing. Located in a private driveway for just 2 properties this unique property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom and front and rear gardens. VIRTUAL TOUR ONLINE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£179,995**

Wolverhampton
Victoria Road, Wednesfield REDUCED



A three bedroom detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, double bathroom and front and rear gardens. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£173,995**

Wednesfield
Robin Grove, Wednesfield



A good size detached two-bedroom bungalow having the benefit of quiet cul-de-sac location. UPVC double glazing, warm gas central heating and no upward chain. The property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, spacious lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garage.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£150,000**

Willenhall
Waddensbrook Lane, W REDUCED



OFFERS INVITED A 3 bedroom semi detached property having the benefit of NO UPWARD CHAIN, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. The property further comprises, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom, front & rear gardens, garage and off road parking.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£144,995**

Willenhall
Barnett Road, Portobello, Willenhall



REFURBISHED, IMPROVED AND MODERNISED A 3 bedroom semi detached family home occupying a corner plot benefiting from gas central heating, UPVC double glazing & fitted kitchen. This total refurbished property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, through lounge, re-fitted kitchen, re-fitted bathroom, 3 bedrooms, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garage centrally located. THIS PROPERTY MUST BE VIEWED. VIRTUAL TOUR ONLINE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£139,995**

Willenhall
Magness Crescent, Willenhall



Well presented, extended 3 bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. In a sought after location the property briefly comprises, re-fitted kitchen, utility area, spacious L-shaped lounge, ground floor rear entrance (bedroom four) 3 bedrooms on 1st floor, re-fitted bathroom with shower, garage, front and rear gardens. VIRTUAL TOUR ONLINE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£139,995**

Willenhall
Willow Grove, Willenhall



An attractive modern 2.5 storey and terrace family home having the benefit of gas central heating, UPVC double glazing and WIRC garage. This well presented property, further comprises, reception hall, guest W.C., re-fitted kitchen, three double bedrooms, fitted bathroom in bedrooms one and two, and bathroom one with en-suite shower room, family bathroom, rear garden, separate garage and off road parking. VIRTUAL TOUR ONLINE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£136,995**

Willenhall
Treetops Drive, Willenhall REDUCED



A three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, dining room, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, off road parking for several vehicles and separate garage. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£134,995**

Willenhall
Lakeside Close, Willenhall



50% SHARE PROPERTY A three bedroom detached family home in a cul-de-sac having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. At the 50% part buy 50% part buy scheme the part buy has two bedrooms, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with en-suite shower room, family bathroom, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garage.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£65,000**

Essington
Broad Lane, Essington



OPEN TO OFFERS A two bedroom detached bungalow in a sought after location having the benefit of no upward chain and gas central heating. This property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom, front and rear gardens, off road parking and tandem garage.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£145,000**

Walsall
Langmead Close, Brierley REDUCED



A well presented three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of no upward chain, double glazing and gas central heating. The property further comprises, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, conservatory, fitted kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, three bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, off road parking, garage and front & rear gardens.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£128,995**

Wolverhampton
Laburnum Road, Off Stow Heath Lane, Wolverhampton



A very well presented, upgraded and improved 3 bedroom detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and gas central location. This splendid property briefly comprises, reception hall, spacious lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, conservatory, side covered entrance, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garage.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£134,995**

Willenhall
New Street, Willenhall



Improved and upgraded, two bedroom and terrace family home ideal for the first time buyer or landlord. The property has the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and fitted kitchen. Further comprising, reception hall, lounge with feature fireplace, dining room, re-fitted kitchen, utility room, two bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom and front and rear gardens. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£114,995**

Willenhall
Temple Road, Willenhall



Offers invited on a two bedroom middle terrace home in need of some refurbishment and upgrading whilst having the benefit of double glazing, and no upward chain. The property briefly comprises, lounge, dining room, kitchen, ground floor shower room, two double bedrooms and rear garden.
OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£64,995**

VIRTUAL TOURS

VIEW OUR PROPERTIES ON YOUR MOBILE PHONE

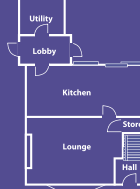
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BANKS STREET, WILLENHALL

- Detached three/four bedroomed period property
- Modernised but retaining many original features
- Gas central heating and extensive double glazing

OFFERS £250,000



- Spacious through lounge
- Dining room and large fitted kitchen
- Side garage and driveway
- Large enclosed stepped rear garden



NIGHTINGALE CRESCENT, COPPICE FARM

- FOUR BEDROOMED DETACHED
- EN SUITE OFF MASTER BEDROOM
- FITTED KITCHEN & UTILITY
- GROUND FLOOR W.C.
- GARAGE CONVERTED TO OFFICE/STOREROOM
- OFF ROAD PARKING

OFFERS £219,950



FURZEBANK WAY, WILLENHALL

- Three bedroomed Semi Detached on Corner Plot
- Popular Estate for Families
- UPVC Double Glazed and Gas Central Heating
- Fitted Kitchen and Lounge
- Detached Garage
- Bathroom
- Enclosed Rear Garden

OFFERS £134,950



POOLES LANE, WILLENHALL

- Four bedroomed detached
- Refurbished and extended
- Two reception rooms
- Conservatory
- Fitted kitchen
- En-suite

OFFERS £235,000



BLOXWICH ROAD SOUTH, WILLENHALL

- Three bedroomed end terrace
- Deceptively spacious
- Two reception rooms
- Spacious kitchen
- Utility room
- Extensive double glazing and central heating

Offers in the region of £92,500



PINSON ROAD, WILLENHALL

- Three bedrooms
- Recently refurbished
- Gas fired central heating
- Double glazing
- Downstairs cloakroom
- Off road parking

OFFERS £85,000



STANLEY ROAD, DARLASTON

- Gas Fired Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Kitchen
- Lounge
- Extended Dining Room
- Two Bedrooms
- Foregarden with Parking and rear garden

OFFERS £79,950



COTSWOLD GROVE, COPPICE FARM, WILLENHALL

- Contact us for more details about shared ownership
- Over 55's ground floor apartment
- One bedroom
- Electric storage heaters and Double glazing
- Attractive communal gardens
- Communal parking

OFFERS £54,950 for a 70% share

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FRASER WOOD
WILLENHALL
To celebrate the
10th ANNIVERSARY
of the
opening of our branch at
LANE HEAD, WILLENHALL, Fraser Wood are offering a
25% DISCOUNT
on all new instructions during the month of February
(subject to Sole Agency and normal terms & conditions)

Join us now to arrange your
FREE MARKET APPRAISAL
and take advantage of this special offer



CHAUCER AVENUE, WILLENHALL

- Modern Three Bedroomed Semi-detached
- Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen
- Front Driveway and rear garden
- Side Garage

OFFERS £124,950



BROADWATERS ROAD, DARLASTON

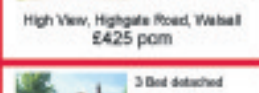
- Semi-detached two bedroomed House
- Large Plot with additional Parking
- UPVC double glazed and Gas Central Heating
- Lounge
- Fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- Bathroom

OFFERS £94,950

PROPERTIES TO LET

Mellish Park, Walsall
£700 pcmLorimers Grove, Walsall
£495 pcmGomer Street, Willenhall
£295 pcmHavergal Place, Sharnhall
£595 pcmWisteria Drive, Brownhills West
£550 pcm

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Fernleigh Road, Walsall
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£550 pcmVictoria Avenue, Bloxwich
£450 pcmWhitmore Street, Walsall
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DIXONS

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DoingMore...

Hawthorn Place, Walsall



Offers Over £100,000 **REDUCED**

A well presented two bedroom semi-detached home situated on a popular road in Bentley. Would be great for first time buyers!!! Vendors motivated to sell.

Gurnard Close, Willenhall



£132,500 **NEW**

A two bedroom semi-detached home benefitting from a tandem garage, stunning conservatory and having been improved by the current owner.

Instow Close, Willenhall



£125,000 **NEW**

A two bedroom semi-detached home situated on Coppice Farm. Well presented home ideal for first time buyer. Comprises lounge, kitchen and bathroom.

Edinburgh Drive, Summer Hayes



£150,000

A dormer bungalow comprising lounge, extended kitchen and bathroom, conservatory, three double bedrooms, front and rear gardens, driveway and no chain

Kewstoke Road, Sneyd Park



£140,000 **NEW**

A two bedroom semi-detached home situated on a generous corner plot on the ever popular Sneyd Park development. Moments from Essington and access to local shops

Bramble Close, Willenhall



£130,000 **NEW**

A three bedroom semi-detached home situated on a peaceful cul-de-sac in New Invention, comprising lounge, kitchen, conservatory, bathroom and rear garden.

Queen Street, Moxley



£75,000 **NEW**

A three bedroom terraced home situated in a popular part of Moxley. Viewing is recommended. Comprising lounge, kitchen, bathroom and rear garden.

Fairlawn Way, Willenhall



£97,995 **NEW**

A three bedroom terraced home presented in immaculate order. This would make a great family home due to the amount of living space on offer.

Squires Grove, Willenhall



£100,000

A modern two bedroom second floor apartment briefly comprising, communal entrance, lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom, double glazing. Viewing highly recommended.

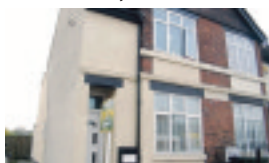
King Edward Street, Wednesbury



£80,000

A character two bedroom semi-detached home situated moments from Darlaston Town Centre. Would be a great first time buy, two reception rooms and rear garage with inspection

St. Annes Road, Willenhall



£90,000

A three bedroom end terrace with driveway parking and spacious rooms. Having been extensively improved by its current owner this property would be ideal for a first time

Pinfold St. Extension, Wednesbury



£90,000 **REDUCED**

A well presented traditional two bedroom semi-detached home situated in a peaceful cul-de-sac. Offering spacious rooms and many period features

The Barnard, The Keep, Stafford Road



£94,950 **NEW**

A brand new development offering two/three bedrooms houses and a coach house situated off the popular Stafford Road, Darlaston

Torridon Road, Willenhall



Offers in excess of £155,000

A detached bungalow set in Willenhall with accommodation comprising in brief of lounge, kitchen, conservatory, two bedrooms, bathroom, rear garden and workshop, the property also benefits from having central heating and double glazing



Ampleforth Drive, Willenhall



£170,000

Offering no-chain this well presented three bedroom detached property is an ideal family home. A very popular development with excellent access to Jct. 10 M6.

Princethorpe Road, Willenhall



Offers Over £160,000

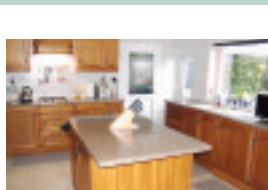
A spacious double fronted four bedroom end terraced townhouse, presented in excellent order and situated close to the M6 and Black Country Route.

Broad Lane, Essington



£260,000

A two bedroom detached bungalow with accommodation comprising in brief of lounge, kitchen, loft space with dormer windows to front and rear. Garage with outhouses and ample frontage, also benefitting from central heating and double glazing.



Goldcroft Road, Wednesbury



Offers In Region of £170,000

A stunning three bedroom detached residence. A viewing is essential to appreciate the amount of space this property has to offer.

Mill Lane, Willenhall



£220,000

A well presented and spacious four bedroom detached residence. Beautiful gardens. Vendor motivated to sell. Viewing recommended

Oxsted Close, Wednesfield



£245,000

Three bedroom detached bungalow situated in cul-de-sac in Wednesfield, comprising lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, dining room, ensuite, bathroom and detached

Princethorpe Road, Willenhall



£235,000

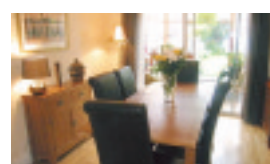
Four bedroom executive detached home situated on the popular Scholars Heath development. Offering spacious living and luxurious surroundings and being one of only four in a cul-de-sac

Cannock Road, Willenhall



£200,000

Three bedroom detached, two reception rooms, fully fitted kitchen, bespoke designed conservatory, bathroom, large frontage and rear garden. Traditional property with modern interior and open to serious offers. Viewing essential to fully appreciate the accommodation



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**7 Queens Parade
Bloxwich
Walsall
WS3 2EX
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Bealeys Lane Bloxwich

- Individually designed Four Bedroom Detached
- Views to King George V Playing Fields
- Open Plan Accommodation
- Three Bathrooms
- 50% STAMP DUTY PAID
- Viewing Essential

£299,950



Churston Close

- Large Four Bed Detached House
- Kitchen ● Bathroom
- Rear Garden ● Off Road Parking
- Lounge ● Dining

£220,000



Old Hall Court Aldridge

- Farmhouse courtyard location
- Two Bedrooms, Two Bathrooms, Exposed Beams
- Views over open countryside ● Electric security entry gate
- Gas central heating and double glazing
- Easy reach of Junction 7 of the M6
- Features stone fireplace
- Master bedroom with En-suite shower room
- Viewing is essential

£184,950



Heather Road Bloxwich

- Four Bedroom Semi
- Open Plan Lounge ● Play Room/Study
- Dining Room/Fitted Kitchen ● Conservatory
- Utility with downstairs W.C. of-Block Paved Driveway
- Rear Garden with workshop/sunroom
- D.Glazing & C-Heating ● No Upward Chain

In the Region of £139,950



Bloxwich Road Walsall

- Four Bedroom End of Terrace Property
- Dining Room ● Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Rear Garden
- Off Road Parking
- NO UPWARD CHAIN

£169,950



Goscote Road Bloxwich

- Three Bed semi
- Large Lounge
- Garage and Off Road Parking
- Blocked Paved
- Drive with Gated access
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating

Offers in the Region of £153,500



Buttermere Grove Willenhall

- Three Bedrooms
- Head of Cul-de-Sac Location
- Modernised Throuthout
- Re-Fitted Kitchen & Bathroom
- Through Lounge & Conservatory
- Integral Garage ● Parking to Front
- Popular Coppice Farm Estate

£149,950



Windrush Close Pelsall

- Three Storey Three Bedroom Town House
- Separate Garage and Allocated parking
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Master Bedroom with En-Suite shower room
- Views to open fields to front
- Enclosed Rear Garden ● Popular Location
- Fitted Kitchen Family Bathroom
- Downstairs W.C. & Cloakroom

In the Region of £147,950



Simmonds Close Bloxwich

- Gas Central Heating and Part Double Glazing
- Entrance Porch ● Reception Hall
- Lounge with access to extended Dining Area
- Extended Kitchen
- Utility with downstairs W.C.
- Three Bedrooms
- Bathroom with separate shower outside
- Side Garage
- Gardens to front and rear

Fixed Price of £120,000



Samuel Street Bloxwich

- Three Bedroom Detached
- Through Lounge
- In need of modernisation
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Driveway with Off Road Parking
- Rear Garden & Garage
- No Upward Chain

£119,950

SHOWHOME OPEN DAY SATURDAY 29 JANUARY 2011

A new year – a new home?

Come along to Field Road, Bloxwich Saturday 29 January, to the showhome open day from 10am until 4pm.
The development is now completed and all remaining units will also be available to view.

- Value for money prices are from £109,950, buyer incentives available
- Two & Three Bedroom Houses
- Integral garages to the three bedroom houses
- Two off road car park spaces for the two bedroom houses
- New build 10 year guarantee

- Fully fitted kitchen including fridge freezer, washer dryer, gas hob and fan assisted oven
- Fully fitted bathrooms including floor and wall tiling
- Gas central heating and double glazing
- Rear garden
- Downstairs W.C.

Viewing by Appointment to book your slot please call Steve or Rosie on 01922

Upward Developments (West Midlands) Ltd 45 Reeves Street Bloxwich WS3 2D Co Reg. 2009364. Terms and conditions apply.



upward



Cypress Road Walsall

- Three Bedroom End Terrace
- Quiet Cul-de-Sac Location
- Through Lounge ● Fitted Kitchen
- Utility & Downstairs W.C. ● Side Passage
- Large Enclosed Rear Garden
- Block Paved Driveway with Off Road Parking
- Double glazing & Gas Central Heating
- No Upward Chain

£119,950



Buxton Close Bloxwich

- Three Bedrooms
- Fitted Kitchen/ Diner
- Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
- Side Passage/ Conservatory
- Front & Rear Gardens

Offers in the Region of £111,950



Goscote Lane Walsall

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Corner plot scope to extend
- Rear Garden not overlooked
- Block paved driveway
- With Off Road Parking
- Entrance Porch ● Lounge
- Kitchen ● Downstairs W.C.
- Family Bathroom
- Double glazing & Central Heating

Offer in excess of £100,000



Bloxwich Road Walsall

- Three Bed Terrace Property
- Ideal for First Time Buyers
- Through Lounge
- Kitchen
- Family Bathroom
- Rear Garden

£96,950



Church Place Bloxwich

- Two Bedroom End of Terrace
- Front & Rear Gardens
- D.G. & Gas
- Central Heating
- Secured Parking to Rear
- Viewing Highly Recommended

£95,000



Tintern Crescent Mossley Estate

- Three Bed Semi-Detached Property
- Two Reception Rooms
- Kitchen ● Bathroom ● Separate WC
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Fishley Court, Fishley Lane Bloxwich

- One Bed Ground Floor Apartment
- Lounge/Kitchen
- Bathroom with Shower Over Bath
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Lancaster Place Bloxwich

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- Quiet Cul-de-Sac Location
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- Gas Central Heating
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- Lounge Kitchen Utility
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Essex Street Walsall

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- Two Reception rooms
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Tewkesbury Road Bloxwich

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- Lounge
- Kitchen ● Bathroom
- Separate W.C.
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- No Upward Chain

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Station Street Bloxwich

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Reduced price for three-bed home

Located in a popular area with easy access to both Wolverhampton and Walsall, this mid-terraced home is on the market as part of a leading local agent's series of January reductions.

The three-bedroomed home, in Victoria Street, Willenhall, has gas central heating, an extensive rear garden and plenty of potential.

Estate agent Paul Dubberley is managing the sale of this freehold home, inviting offers based on a newly-reduced price of £59,995.

Briefly, the house comprises a lounge with fireplace, sitting room, kitchen, family bathroom, three bedrooms and a rear garden.

Amenities

A wide range of amenities is available nearby, along with excellent transport links to surrounding areas.

Entering, the front-facing sitting room has dimensions of 11ft 9in x 11ft, with a bow window, radiator, laminate flooring, coved ceiling, dado rail, under stairs cupboard and an entrance to the lounge.

Measuring 11ft 9in x 11ft 11in, this has a rear-facing window, a brick-built fireplace housing a gas fire, laminate flooring, radiator, coved ceiling and a doorway to the kitchen. This has dimensions of 10ft 11in x 6ft 10in, with a window and door to the side, a wall-mounted central heating boiler, a sink and drainer and a range of

matching wall, base and drawer units with roll-top worksurfaces. There are wooden panelled walls, a radiator, plumbing and space for an appliance, a gas cooker point and a door to the bathroom.

This faces the rear and has a radiator, built-in store cupboard, panelled bath, low-level WC and pedestal wash basin.

On the first floor, the landing has a radiator and doors leading off to the three bedrooms. The master bedroom faces the

front, measures 11ft 10in x 11ft and has a radiator and dado rail.

Bedroom two faces the rear, has dimensions of 12ft x 9ft 1in, a radiator and a store cupboard with access to the loft. The third bedroom measures 11ft x 6ft 11in, faces the rear and has a radiator. At the rear of the house, there is a garden with a brick-built shed. To arrange a viewing, visit www.pauldubberley.co.uk or call the agent's Willenhall office on 01902 633323.



This three-bedroomed home in Willenhall is on offer as part of the agent's range of reductions.

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LOT 1

14 Abbotts Street, Walsall

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 10.00 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am



A traditionally styled brick and tile two bedroom semi detached dwelling house situated close to Bloxwich centre but in need of full modernisation and improvement comprising lounge, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, WC, two bedrooms, box room, part double glazing and off street parking.

GUIDE PRICE \$45,000-\$50,000

LOT 2

58 Lindon Road, Brownhills

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 9.30 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am



Traditionally styled mid terraced residence in need of full modernisation and improvement situated between Walsall Wood and Brownhills. The accommodation comprises two reception rooms, good size kitchen, ground floor shower room, on the first floor: Two bedrooms, third bedroom accessed via bedroom one, off road rear parking, fore and rear gardens.

GUIDE PRICE \$45,000-\$55,000

LOT 3

14 Lancaster Place, Walsall

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 10.30 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am



Ideal for a first time buyer or investor this traditional mid terrace property situated close to Bloxwich centre has gas fired central heating and part double glazing and comprises reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, lobby, three bedrooms, bathroom.

GUIDE PRICE \$70,000-\$80,000

LOT 4

96 Walstead Road, Walsall

Viewing Saturday 22nd January at 11.00 am & Wednesday 26th January at 9.00 am



Traditional styled gas centrally heated and double glazed semi detached residence offering tremendous scope for improvement. Two reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom, good size store room, gardens.

GUIDE PRICE \$110,000-\$120,000

Late Entries

Further details to follow:-

LOT 5

70 Lodge Road, Walsall

Traditional three bedroom semi in need of complete modernization.

Guide Price \$150,000 plus.

Viewing: Saturday 22nd January and

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LOT 6

48 Cartbridge Lane, Rushall

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**Gorey Close
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- An attractively situated semi-detached house
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- Lounge, extended dining room, fitted kitchen
- Three bedrooms, family bathroom/WC
- Single car garage, driveway
- Easily maintained gardens
- Open aspect to the front
- Viewing Essential

Offers In The Region Of £138,950

**Swan Drive,
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- Allocated secure parking to the rear
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Offers in The Region of £74,950

**Kingfisher Court
Willenhall**

- A compact ground floor apartment situated in a modern block
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Double bedroom, bathroom/WC
- Large through lounge and open plan kitchenette
- Parking space and communal gardens

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**Reedley Road
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Offers in The Region of £99,950

**Andrew drive
Willenhall**

- A much improved & re-fitted semi-detached bungalow
- Gas central heating & double glazing
- Spacious Lounge
- Re-fitted kitchen
- Two bedrooms
- Detached garage
- Viewing Essential

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Gardening



Conifers outlined by snow to show branches looking rather splendid.



Picturesque – snow transformed the garden into a winter wonderland



Snow covered table and chairs look inviting from the kitchen window



The weeping beech here has grown very tall in recent years

Bleak, yet a beautiful start to another year

On the first day of January, I always go around my garden counting the flowers that are out.

Usually I can find about 100 different varieties – not fully fledged, but at least recognisable.

However, this year for the first time ever, there was hardly a single one. The weather in December was so awful they had all been eliminated.

There was a fog to start with, which made the hoar frost stick to all the little branches and every twig was encircled with white. The garden looked wonderful, but I soon became rather fed up with the continual whiteness.

It grew colder and colder, with pipes freezing for the first time in 45 years. Fortunately, they thawed out again without actually bursting, so we were very lucky.

Some trees looked super, like the weeping beech,



GARDENING WITH PAT EDWARDS

which has grown to quite a height – I had not realised how fine it is until now.

Many of the conifers were outlined to show their branches looking rather splendid. The view from the kitchen window of the table and chairs looked quite inviting.

I thought a lot about the small and seemingly vulnerable birds, so kept putting out lumps of fat and biscuit crumbs while keeping the bird feeders full of nuts and seeds.

Spotted woodpeckers came every day, and many different types of tit were always there, while the dunnet

was underneath picking up the fallen bits all the time. A great big blackbird was so greedy that I scared him off several times, but he always came back.

The only bird who beat him off was the robin, who became so tame, he would come to the window to remind us.

My first job each morning was to boil the kettle and melt the ice on the bird bath, so that our feathered friends had a good supply of water. All their usual supplies were frozen so hard that they would dehydrate very quickly otherwise.

The berries were good this year, but they were quickly eaten up. Holly berries were marvellous, and cotoneasters were a great standby.

Many people said that a hard winter was on the way, but I really cannot see how the plants can know that it is going to be extra cold. The awful thing is that we are only at the beginning of January, and there could be another two months of the same sort of weather still to come. I certainly hope not.

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VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.3 CDTi ECOFLEX

ROAD TEST

Astra ups its game and takes top spot

December saw Vauxhall's Astra return to the top spot as the UK's best selling car for the month.

In its decades-old battle with the Ford Focus and previously the Ford Escort, the Astra has often come out on top.

The battle has been played out across a number of scenarios from the Astra CTE versus Escort RS Turbo conflict of the late 1980s to the soft tops of the mid nineties, but in these more austere times the contest is not to be the fastest or most glamorous, but to be the most frugal.

As might be expected where these two vehicles are concerned, the efficiency specialist line-ups are similar, with both Vauxhall and Ford offering stop-start and non-stop-start equipped versions of their economical family hatchbacks.

The non-stop-start versions have a cheaper initial purchase price but lose out, albeit marginally, in terms of fuel economy and emissions.

With the Astra, this is less of an issue than with the Focus because, whereas the addition of stop-start drops the 1.6-litre diesel Focus Econetic from 104g/km to 99g/km CO2 emissions and thus from tax band B to free of charge A, the Vauxhall drops from 109g/km to 104g/km, remaining in tax band B.

The Astra loses that battle, then, but not necessarily the war, as it works hard to make up for the initial shortcomings elsewhere. The biggest thorn in Ford's side comes in the form of the Astra's interior.

The Focus's upmarket, high quality interior



Ride quality is very good in the Astra



The Astra's cabin is of higher quality

has been a large part of its 'class-leading' appeal, but the current generation of Astra has upped its game in this regard.

There's a high quality ambience in the cabin, giving the Astra a mini-Insignia feel. Material quality is very good and plastics are soft to the touch but sturdy. In the Exclusiv model, soft lighting beneath the gear lever surround and in the door handle moulds is a premium touch and the chunky, sturdy feel to the steering wheel is replicated around the interior, in the metal rimmed knobs and the solid column stalks.

The Astra holds its own against its closest rival from the outside, too. Like the Focus



The Astra Ecoflex is the green version of the long-lived model, with good economy

the Astra boasts a contemporary design that's attractive but refined and sensible.

The Ecoflex model needn't suffer visually for its greener emphasis, either. 17-inch alloy wheels are optional, to replace the flush-covered steels as standard. The revised aero package does little to harm the Astra's attractive exterior lines and the automatic aero-flap behind the grille is discreetly hidden. A particularly keen eye may even spot the marginally lowered suspension, which reduces drag alongside the low-rolling resistance tyres.

However, the major changes, although still hidden from view, are more noticeable.

The taller gearing, for example, which comes courtesy of a longer final drive ratio, affecting all five forward gears. The positive side is that high speed and long distance cruises are more refined thanks to lower rpm. This works well with the Astra's impressive ride quality, even on the revised suspension.

It does result in less inspiring straight line performance than some eco rivals, however. Using a smaller capacity diesel engine seems like an obvious way to reduce fuel consumption and works very well around town, but when greater acceleration is required the 1.3-litre unit does need to be pushed harder and kept above 2,500rpm for any real per-

formance. This means the engine remains audible in the cabin, too, particularly when cold.

A lower idling speed counters this slightly in the standard Ecoflex model, but not as much as the zero-idling philosophy of the stop-start equipped model.

On the move, the Astra can hold its head high. Ride quality is very good – of benefit to driver and passengers – and the chassis is responsive but predictable and secure. ESP is part of a respectable list of standard equipment (although electric rear windows are omitted for weight saving), an important factor for a family car.

Similarly, an accommodating interior boosts the family appeal. Boot space behind the hatch is conveniently proportioned with a bigger opening than initially appears from the outside. The rear bench will accept two adults with little fuss, too, with good access offered by the five-door layout.

The on-paper figures suggest that the Astra hasn't quite trumped the Focus in the battle to be greenest, but the stylish and noticeably well-built model is impressive enough to keep the contest alive for the foreseeable future.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Model: Vauxhall Astra 1.3 CDTi Ecoflex Exclusiv, £18,005 on the road. Engine: 1.3-litre turbocharged petrol unit developing 95bhp and 140lb/ft of torque. Transmission: Five-speed manual transmission, driving the front wheels. Performance: Maximum speed 109mph, 0-62mph 13.8 seconds. CO2 emissions: 138g/km. Economy: 68.9mpg.

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Sports boost for BMW M3



The suspension is lowered by another 10mm



The BMW M3's purposeful-looking interior

Motoring news

Special birthday for rally

IT WAS 100 years ago that the first Monte Carlo Rally took place and this year's rally will be the first one for Peugeot UK's Guy Wilks and Phil Pugh in a Peugeot 207 S2000.

The rally is steeped in history and can even be said to have created the sport of rallying.

In the first one in 1911 competitors set off from all four corners of Europe and then "rallied" together to finish up in Monte Carlo to celebrate the end of a unique event.

The current event no longer sees competitors start from the four corners, but it is, however, no less of a challenge.

In 1911 the first rally was won by Henri Rougier at the wheel of a 25 hp Turcat-Mery.

Now competitors will take up the challenge in state-of-the-art 300 bhp, four wheel drive Super 2000 rally cars.

The cars have changed a lot since the first rally but the need to control the car over ice and snow-covered surfaces too slippery to stand on has not.

The rally started on Wednesday and finishes in the early hours of Saturday.

Cold boost for Subaru

ALL-WHEEL DRIVE specialist manufacturer Subaru saw a huge increase in visitors to its website during what turned out to be the coldest December for 110 years.

While the UK shivered in Arctic conditions there was one area of hot activity – at subaru.co.uk

The number of site visitors increased by 57 per cent compared to the same period in 2009, when numbers hit a previous record high.

On Monday December 20, one of the worst days of the cold snap, hits to the site rocketed by 135 per cent alone.

Subaru UK marketing director Kenyon Neads, said: "For the second year in a row, we've seen a direct correlation between wintry chaos on UK roads and people looking to find out more about our sure-footed range."

DESPITE BMW's latest M3 boasting a muscular V8 engine and a considerable 420 horsepower, some fans of the high performance coupe wanted more; more control, more driver involvement.

More of a precision instrument than the similar size but distinctly hooligan-esque C63 AMG from Mercedes, the M3 offers the enthusiastic driver a versatile and accomplished experience. Yet, some critics have argued that the car lacks an 'edge' when it comes to extracting the maximum enjoyment. BMW's response is the Competition Package.

Let's get something straight, though: the M3 isn't a bad car. In fact, it's a very good car.

From the original, trend-setting E30 to the present day, the evolutionary process has been a steady one. The application of more power, more performance and more useful technology has seen the M3 be transformed from race track special to supercar-baiting all-rounder.

In a bid to ensure drivers felt more at one with their M3, BMW devised the Competition Package.

Don't worry, there isn't a roll cage or cut off switch in sight – it's not that kind of competition bundle.

The same is true when engaging in higher speed activities on, say a track. It's at times like this that you fully understand the car's true potential; the returned electronics work tirelessly in the background to help and enhance the experience, leaving the M3's vocal V8 motor to take centre stage.

Those same critics will no doubt be quick to complain about the perceived increased focus on electronic aids in what is supposed to be a driver's car, but once behind the wheel you'll soon discover that you're still very much in control.

From the car's slick manual gearbox to its weighty, accurate steering and progressive brakes, BMW's M3 offers appreciative and enthusiastic drivers an experience that's second to none in the high performance coupe market. Factor in the Competition Package enhancements and the search for the car's 'edge' is over. It's here and it's all good.

Attractive

With suspension lowered by 10mm and the inclusion of some rather attractive-looking 19-inch alloy wheels, this particular M3 looks more purposeful even before a key is turned.

Mechanical changes aside, BMW also turned its attention to the car's electronics. Enhancements to the M3's Dynamic Stability Control system and the inclusion of a Sport mode for the Electronic Damper control system complete the changes.

So what about the practical experience? In a nutshell the car is good – very good. The V8 motor is and always has been a gem. It sounds fantastic when pushed hard; barking its way through the gears like a mini-me Nascar racer. A criminally infectious experience if you value your driving licence.

At a more intellectual level, the presence of the Competition Package add-ons subtly raise the enjoyment level by allowing you to further fine tune the car's electronic helpers and go that bit harder and faster.

You get the best of both

FACTS

GLANCE

Model: BMW M3 Competition Package, from £57,930 on the road inc Competition Package.

Engine: 4.0-litre V8 petrol unit developing 414bhp.

Transmission: Six-speed manual transmission, driving the rear wheels.

Performance: Maximum speed 155mph, 0-62mph 4.8 seconds.

Economy: 22.8mpg. CO2 Rating: 290g/km.

Suspension can be fine-tuned electronically



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thechronicle

RUGBY

A better effort by Aldridge

League high fliers Civil Service had knocked the stuffing out of Aldridge in the previous encounter to inflict their heaviest defeat of the season.

The home side gave a much more powerful performance this time round and if they hadn't been subjected to some controversial adjudicating, the rewards – for the team effort that was put in – would have been greater.

Aldridge forwards showed from the off that they had the measure of the opposition pack and with the slope and wind behind them, kicking to set up attacking positions seemed the shrewd option but they failed to fully exploit the advantage.

As it was they maintained control in the first period and a

MIDLANDS 5 WEST (NORTH)
ALDRIDGE 6 8-HAM CIVIL SERVICE 17

well-struck penalty from scrum-half Chris Jones opened the scoring.

The visitors looked dangerous with the ball in hand but the home side's defence was solid.

It was from an innocuous looking ruck 30 metres out that Service took the lead when winger Mark Manton picked up and scampered up the blind side to run round and score between the posts. No 10 Liam Clarke added the conversion.

Civil Service had their best spell early in the second half. From a forward encounter on the left, swift handling transferred the ball to the opposite wing where Clarke utilising some

fancy footwork got the touch down in the corner. He added the conversion and shortly afterwards a penalty to complete the visitors' scoring.

Aldridge then had their best spell where the forwards took control and, driving the heart out of the opposition pack, hammered away against their goal line for most of the last quarter of the match but although managing to get the ball over the line a number of occasions couldn't quite get it down.

It was not going to be their day. Chris Jones broke clear and was on his way to the line when he was whistled back for a service infringement but he did score a second penalty late on which seemed scant reward for what the home side had contributed.

New look but little charity on show

With no club sponsor to usher in the New Year, Bloxwich took matters into their own hands and approached a local charity, Walsall Hospice, to offer prime spot on their team kit.

The charity shirt proved a big winner as the first team remained undefeated at King George's (KGV).

After a last-kick-of-the-game penalty, for a 10-7 win at Market Drayton last week, Bloxwich were keen not to repeat such a lack-



Bloxwich Rugby Club with Rachel Ridler, centre left, and Cheryl Bradburne, centre right flanking team captain Richard Jones

BLOXWICH 53 WARLEY 0

lustre outing. A powerful home pack set about their task from the outset.

The controlled play around the ruck created options on either side of the pitch where a swift ball out to winger Sean Bottomer exploited the space to commit the last defender and put full back Martin Maclean over. Daniel Hough added the second try. Handling errors slowed the scoring down until 25 minutes, when Danny Palmer took an angled run for his first try.

On the stroke of half time left wing Luke Hough secured the try bonus point. Warley appeared influenced by the charity shirts as they donated a further five tries, but in truth a disciplined forward display and controlled possession freed the back line to concentrate on attacking space. An eccentric performance by No8 Adam Bowater was punctuated with two tries and three conversions. Danny Palmer and Luke Hough went over in space, out wide, for their second tries. On the final play of the game fly-half Craig Sofely crossed for his first try for the club, Sean Bottomer added the conversion at the final whistle.

Three other charities share space with Walsall Hospice on the team shirts: Midlands Air Ambulance; Help for Heroes and Woodenspoon. Keep updated at www.bloxwichrfc.com.

Walsall keep a tight rein on game for win

LEAMINGTON 18 WALSALL 24

Winless Leamington put up a terrific performance for well over an hour of this match and, if anything they deserved more than a solitary losing score at the end of this game.

During the first half in particular, they displayed a free flowing adventurous style of rugby that belied their lowly league position and they fully deserved their 15-3 lead at half time.

The visitors started strongly, but their only reward for a period of sustained pressure was a Matt Wood penalty.

But even at this early stage, it was evident that the Warwickshire team were prepared to play an expansive game and were prepared to run the ball at every opportunity.

They were soon rewarded for their positive attitude when some good support play saw them break through the Walsall defence before producing some fine inter passing over forty metres before flanker Matt Cooper dived over near the posts.

Simon Tyler's conversion made it 7-3. Just five minutes later and the hosts scored a similar try from a similar distance. This time it was a sustained attack along their right touchline that saw full back Adam Preece breaking through Walsall tackles to score wide out.

Defending

During the rest of the first half, the hosts were keen to push home their advantage, and only some desperate Walsall defending kept them at bay. Referee Nicola Reynolds, who kept firm control throughout the afternoon, awarded a penalty to Leamington at a ruck.

Scrum half Patrick Northover did well to overcome the muddy conditions, putting over a fine thirty five metre penalty to make it 15-3 at the interval. Walsall began to take more control of the game during the second half and showed a willingness to move the ball at every opportunity. They reduced the deficit in the fifty fifth minute when Wootton and Mould broke out of defence and linked up with flanker Rob Tierney.

He made good ground before feeding winger Jono Edwards, he finished off well from 20 metres. Wood's conversion narrowed the gap to five points. However, the hosts continued to try and maintain their "free flowing" style and another long range penalty from the impressive Northwood gave them an 18-10 lead.

It was the visitors who finished the strongest and they put themselves back in the game with an excel-



Javan Jarrett on his way to score one of his tries.



Joe Brown on the run.

lent try in the 72nd minute. Winger Paul Naylor made a good run down the right before finding Steve Halbert in support. The Walsall captain carried the ball into the opposition 22 before linking up again with his support players.

Two passes later and the ball reached Harvey Wootton, the powerful centre finished off well to score his first league try for his new club. Wood added, the not too easy conversion, to make it 18-17 with just over five minutes left.

The visitors completed their comeback with what proved to be the winning try with just three minutes left. Tom Emes had made good ground from his own 22, prop forward Pete Fitzgerald's charge took the ball into opposition territory and then some quick passing saw lock Nick Field break through. He found full back Chris Mould in support, he showed good running skills before scoring. Outside half Matt Wood's conversion completed a rather remarkable comeback by the Walsall outfit.

This win eases the Delves Road team away from

the relegation zone in Midlands One West. But they have another vital match this Saturday, when Nuneaton Old Edwardians come to the Broadway.

Walsall 2nds 6 Bournville 2nds 30

Walsall competed well for the majority of the game but continued pressure from the hosts in the last quarter resulted in them scoring three converted tries. Andy Hawkins scored all of Walsall's points.

Walsall 3rds 45 Eccleshall 2nds 15

A comfortable win for the 3rd XV. Tries from Jeff Williamson(2), Kevin Foster (2) Simon LeFevre, Simon Bickley, and Mike Perkins. Mick Broadhurst kicked five conversions.

Walsall 27 Old Coventrians 14 U17s

Walsall played the first half against a strong wind. But they produced some stylish play, and were soon three tries in front. Javan Jarrett scored two, with Seb Green also crossing. Ben Tipson converting one of these. Old Cova replied with a try and conversion of their own just before half time, which was suitably matched by another Walsall try by Joe Brown.

PELSALL VILLA

Villa see efforts fail in a six goal thriller

This was a six goal thriller, chances galore at both ends, two penalties and a contender for goal of the season from Sam Collins.

Villa had fought back from 2-0 down but gifted the glassboys two goals in the last 24 minutes.

After 10 minutes the home side went ahead, the ball was played up to Riccardo Richards and his slide rule pass took out three defenders to put Nathan Edgington racing in from the left of the box and he calmly scored past the advancing debutant Villa keeper Chris Collins.

Mark Wooldridge put a stooping header wide on 12 minutes, six minutes later James Lewis sliced an effort wide of the post from a right wing Andrew Bentley free kick.

Richards raced away on the left on 22 minutes and his low cross flashed across the face of the Villa goal.

Four minutes later a long clearance dropped perfectly for Nathan Singh 40 yards from goal, his first time lob bounced over keeper Collins and off the top of the bar. Singh raced in from the left on 30 minutes, Collins saving bravely at his feet.

Lewis flashed a header just wide on 31 minutes, before Singh collected another long clearance on 32 minutes and saw his low drive superbly taken at full stretch by Collins.

Wooldridge brought a great save from Neil Leech in the Pilks goal on 35

minutes before two minutes later he crossed from the right and Bentley powered a header straight at the keeper.

Back came Pilks, good work wide right by Richards saw him cut inside and his shot was pushed away by Collins who then saved bravely at Singh's feet. On 40 minutes Edgington raced into the box from the right and was brought down, Ross Casey scoring from the spot.

Villa reduced the deficit almost immediately, a long clearance by Collins was misjudged by a defender, Wooldridge pounced and lobbed the keeper from 40 yards to make it 2-1.

In injury time Mitchell Thompson was first to a ball into the box, as Collins raced to meet him he toe-poked the ball wide before the keeper flattened him. The referee pointed to the spot, but justice was done when Casey's spot kick bounced down off the bar and Aaron Simpson completed the clearance.

Villa equalised within five minutes of the restart and what a goal it was, Simpson in the "D" fed Wooldridge on the penalty spot, he laid the ball back into the path of Sam Collins 25 yards out and his scorching low drive flew into the net.

In injury time Richards scored from close range.

Bill Shaw

RUSHALL OLYMPIC

Pics get back on the trail of winning again

Rushall Olympic halted a run of two successive home defeats by claiming maximum points at struggling Shepshed Dynamo to get their promotion play-off challenge back on track.

However, the victory itself was far from a convincing one as the Pics were eventually forced to rely on a penalty conversion and an own goal to finally overcome their resilient hosts.

The visitors were first to threaten in the third minute when Shepshed keeper Gavin Saxby was forced to smartly tip over Alex Melbourne's inswinging corner from the left.

Two minutes later and a defensive mistake from Rushall allowed front runner Gregory Smith to unleash a low drive from just outside the box that Chris Gemmell had to divert.

Home striker Gregory blotted his copy book by picking up a caution for a somewhat agricultural challenge on Mitchell Tolley by the right hand corner flag that left the Pics defender needing treatment.

Three minutes prior to the half hour mark and a big penalty appeal rang out around the ground as Ahmed Obeng darted towards the left by-line and was brought crashing down by a challenge from Dynamo's Billy Stubbs. However, the match official simply waived play on.

It was a different story on 29 minutes when Chris Morris went on a probing run into the right side of the home penalty area.

On this occasion the custodian advanced off his line and only succeeded in upending Olympic's front runner to yield a penalty. The early appearance far less convincing than the incident two minutes earlier.

Nevertheless, the Pics top scorer placed the ball on the 12-yard mark and drove a powerful conversion straight into the middle of the goal to

EVO-STIK LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION SOUTH
SHEPshed DYNAMO 0 RUSHALL OLYMPIC 2

net his 15th of the campaign. Half-Time:

Shepshed Dynamo 0

Rushall Olympic 1

Five minutes following the restart and the hosts were straight on the offensive as front runner Dean Oliver unleashed a low drive towards the right hand near post that was deflected away by the leg of Lee Barrow.

On 57 minutes came the deciding moment of the contest when a superb probing ball in from the right flank by Melbourne to the far post was guided home past his own custodian by the unfortunate Neil Cranger.

However, the home contingent were left very much aggrieved when an off-side flag against striker Morris was overruled.

Twelve minutes later and the visitors looked to increase their advantage further as Danny Ashton tried his luck from 25 yards out with an effort that curled just wide of the top right corner of the Dynamo goal.

Just prior to the commencement of injury time, Rushall's Morris had the ball in the back of the net after latching on to a centre from substitute Danny Lennon, only to see his finish ruled after straying marginally off-side.

The final whistle was the signal for some highly unsavoury scenes involving both sets of players as they departed from the field of play into the tunnel.

It appeared to stem from the fact referee Mr. Hewitt had failed to deal adequately with an earlier incident involving Olympic's Morris and Shepshed's Ian Scream and Sam Leggett during the game.

JUNIORS

PRESIDENTS TROPHY (LEAGUE CUP SEMI FINAL)
HANDSWORTH UTD 0 CRESSWELL WANDERERS 6 U2S

Cresswell travelled to Handsworth for a tricky tie needing to dig deep to reach the final. Wanderers started brightly and broke the deadlock with a quality scissor kick from Ryan Brookes. Jack Dunn quickly doubled their lead hitting the roof of the net.

After further hard work throughout Cresswell made it 3-0 at half time again through Jack Dunn. Ryan Brookes then met a corner to head home, followed by a great penalty save from Ben Harris. Hard work was rewarded with nice strikes from Nathan Griffiths and Man of the match Tom Brownlie to seal Wanderers place against Tipton Youth in the final.

SPORTSCO SAINTS 3 SHIRE OAK SHARKS 1 U16S

Sharks started slowly and fell behind early on and might have conceded more but for excellent keeping from Sam Butters.

Before half time Sharks equalised when Callum Watkins ran on to a through ball and finished neatly. Sharks were better in the second half and Ashley Bell produced a fine save from the SportSCO keeper but unfortunately SportSCO broke from the resulting corner and took the lead.

Kameron Bevington had an excellent game at the back alongside Ryan Klops and kept Sharks in the game. Jake Downey nearly equalised following up a fumble but his effort hit the side netting. SportSCO scored a third with a thunderous free kick to seal the victory near the end.

SHIRE OAK SWIFTS 4 FC BLOXWICH ALL STARS 2 U11S
An action packed first half, in this second

round cup match saw Swifts take the lead from an incredible pass from Ben Windsor which Jack Bechler put in the back of the net.

Strong defensive work from George Congreves, Josh Bechler and Sam Easton kept Bloxwich at bay. Second goal of the match came again from Jack Bechler.

Sam Houlst made an impressive attempt of goal which saw Bloxwich score an own goal. Bloxwich managed to pull a goal back leaving the score board 3-1 at half time.

Again, second half was full of pace, Swifts goal keeper Bailey Sims made a superb save, but Bloxwich was straight back on the ball scoring their second goal.

Swifts kept their game flowing with some impressive passing coming from James Boden and Tom Lloyd, which resulted in Dan Bongeovi getting the fourth goal for the Swifts. A well-deserved man of the match went to Swifts defender Ben Windsor.

ASHMORE PARK RANGERS 3 BLOXWICH UTD 4 U15S

The Red Lions progressed into the next round of the staffs' cup after a hard fought victory at Rangers.

Nathan Smith opened the scoring for Bloxwich when he drilled home after a good cross from Billy Hewitt. Ashmore scored twice to take the lead before Smith set up Kyle Holmes equaliser just before the break.

Holmes added his second with a good strike from outside the area to put Bloxwich in front before Smith curled in a free kick to make it 4-2. Ashmore pulled a goal back late on and pressed hard for an equaliser but Bloxwich held out to go through.

SPORTING KHALSA

Khalsa ready to battle after the long lay-off

SPORTING KHALSA 4 AFC WOMBOURNE 0

Khalsa's first fixture for two months resulted in a comprehensive victory. They started well and could have found themselves in front after five minutes when Fazul Islam went in on goal forcing the keeper to make an early save.

Fazul Islam opened the scoring for Khalsa after 11 minutes when he picked the ball up just outside the 18 yard box and ran at the Wombourne defense, beating three and then slotting the ball home.

Khalsa started to dominate the game as they passed the ball left to right and stretched the game making it hard for the opposition to get hold of the ball.

Culprit

They could have been five up at the break as they missed chance after chance with Jaswinder Sira being the main culprit twice being in front of goal and missing the target.

Khalsa started slowly in the second half as Wombourne improved and Wombourne could have been level after 65 minutes but the striker scuffed his shot.

Sunny Dhyal then scored from a corner heading past the keeper from eight yards out after 67 minutes.

Five minutes later the game was over as Robert Smith a late substitute came on and slotted the ball past the keeper from outside the box.

In the closing minutes Sunny Dhyal got his second of the day after running in on goal and scoring in of the post to finish the game.

Khalsa are at home in the league against Warstones on Saturday.

SPORT

thechronicle

How they fared against Town How they ranked at the Rovers

Man of the Match – Darryl Westlake: Defended beyond his years. Was the only one of the back four not to make basic errors. 7

David Bevan: A home debut to forget as his poor kick handed Rhodes a fourth late on. Hesitated to allow Kilbane extra time to score and was all at sea when McCombe added a second. 4

Andy Butler: Held his hands up after his error gifted Kilbane the chance to equalise and could have been at fault for the visitors' second. Booked for a hard challenge on

Roberts. 5

Manny Smith: Was left in Kilbane's wake for the first goal and struggled to deal with Huddersfield's strikers. 5

Aaron Lescott: He has improved under Smith's guidance but still has rushes of blood and wasted possession on occasion. 6

Alex Nicholls: Scored his second goal in four games to put the Saddlers in charge but needs to get on the scoresheet more often. 6

Matt Richards: The dead ball specialist did it again for his seventh of a

personally productive season. 7.

Paul Marshall: His set-piece deliveries were poor and he wilted as the game progressed. 5/10

Julian Gray: Struggled to break into the game, but came to life during spells in the second. 6/10

Jon Macken: Another frustrating afternoon for the veteran who couldn't test the Huddersfield back-line. 5/10

Will Grigg: The ball wouldn't fall for him and he often just missed out. Bagged a decent assist for Nicholls and the rookie should be pleased. 6

David Bevan: He had little chance with the goals and saved well from Hoskins in the first half. His distribution was much improved. 6

Darryl Westlake: Cleared Hughes' effort off the line as Rovers threatened to take charge but he was caught too square for Kuffour's goal. 7.

Manny Smith: Remained calm in the face of mounting second-half pressure but was booked after a cynical bodycheck on Kuffour late on. 6. **Andy Butler:** He was often in the right place at the right time to clean

up at the back. 7. **Aaron Lescott:** Returned to haunt Rovers after his best display for the Saddlers. Scored his first Walsall goal and was a threat going forward. 8

Alex Nicholls: Found himself in good positions but wasted the chances too often, to the frustrations of the travelling fans. 6

Matt Richards: Enjoyed a comfortable first half where he broke forward well and, like Marshall, had to put his body on the line to save a point. 7 **Paul Marshall:** Spread the play well in a fine first half before

showing his battling qualities with the Saddlers on the rack after the break. 7

Julian Gray: Recalled and worked hard for the team without really threatening going forward, although he was always useful. 7

Man of the match – Will Grigg: Grabbed his first senior goal and was a constant threat to Rovers. He held the ball up well. 8

Jon Macken: Should have scored in the first half when he shot wide and faded in the second half but set up Lescott's late equaliser. 6

LEISURE LEAGUES

Monks stay at top of league

Sean Jackson ensured Monks & Crane remain at the summit of the Wolverhampton 6 a side Monday league as they eased out Sparky's R Us FC by five goals to one.

England Lions kept up the pressure with a battling 5-3 win over Hardly Athletic, whilst in the Tuesday 6 a side league James Dickinson slammed in four goals for leaders The Legends in a 6-0 triumph over The New Inn.

Elsewhere, Coneygree FC were in devastating form as they smashed 14 past Only Here For The Beer who were unable to muster a reply.

Pensnett completed a fine Brierley Hill championship winning season in style as the eased past Green Machine by five goals to one. Pensnett Rejects were in free-scoring form in Division One, smashing an incredible 14 past Pink Gunners who could only reply with one.

Coppice sprung a shock in the Walsall 6 a side Monday Premier Division as they battled past leaders Jollysaddler by four goals to three. Richard Moore proving the difference, FC Oldhouse staked their promotion claims in Division One as Rob Preece was the stand out performer in an 8-2 rout of Bloxwich Uninvited, whilst Wednesday Boys tore apart Trotters FC in the final tier, 9-0 the final outcome. Singh's Six demonstrated just why they lead the way in the Thursday 6 a side Premier Division with a 5-1 hammering of Youth Hattered. The final tier saw something of a goal flourish, as both Bath Street and Isurmotherwell were winners.

BLOXWICH UTD

Crucial cup game

Bloxwich United will be hoping their excellent form in the FA Vase continues this Saturday when they will play host to Torpoint Athletic in the 16 of the competition.

The visitors, who play in the South West Peninsula League in Cornwall, will be making the long journey North on the morning of the game and the Red Lions are hoping a decent home crowd at the game will help them to victory and move them a step closer to the final at Wembley Stadium.

Chairman Rod Jones said "It's a massive game for everyone at the club and we are urging the people of Bloxwich to come down and show their support. We have a lot of local lads playing here and it would be a big help if we can get a good crowd in on the day and really get behind the team" The game kicks off at 3pm.

HOCKEY

LADIES 1ST BLOXWICH 16 KEELE 0

Bloxwich took charge from the first minute and didn't stop till the very end. Every goal has a story and some fantastic play to go with it. Goal scorers – Charlotte Mincher 1, Julie Kempson 4, Amie Lawrence 3, Steph Dean 5, Nic Nullis 2 and Nessha Patel 1. A fantastic team performance.

MENS 1ST BLOXWICH 0 PERSHORE 2

A poor performance all across the pitch cost Bloxwich this week, sloppy passing and poor team play have pretty much ended Bloxwich's chances of promotion. Pershore took the lead halfway through the second half from a short corner then killed the game off in the last few minutes. Bloxwich just couldn't get the ball to there forwards.

Saddlers manage to get a point at The Memorial

BRISTOL ROVERS 2 WALSALL 2

It was the point nobody wanted. In the context of a normal season a 2-2 draw at Bristol Rovers would go down as a job well done.

But after two points from crucial games at Tranmere and Rovers it just doesn't seem enough.

The draw lifted the Saddlers off the bottom of League One and moved them to within seven points of safety but there was a hollow ring to it. Deep down they know it should have been three – not only after their dominant first half – but because they needed the win.

Third bottom Rovers needed it themselves but their plight isn't Walsall's concern.

Tuesday night marked the halfway stage in the season and the Saddlers have 19 points from 23 games – a stat which, if replicated in the second half of the campaign, will send them down.

The outing at the Memorial Stadium completed the games against the rest of the bottom 10 and the Saddlers record leaves a lot to be desired – 10 points out of a possible 27. Walsall have lost too many cheap points this season and almost threw more away last night. They imploded during a horror 60 seconds after the break which almost cost them dear.

Limitations

Caretaker boss Dean Smith has harnessed the spirit but, after only a week in the job, will know all too well the players' limitations.

Smith made two changes from the 3-3 draw at Tranmere with Julian Gray in for rookie Jamie Paterson and Grigg replacing Steve Jones.

Grigg didn't have to wait long for his goal, arriving unmarked at the near post to turn in Alex Nicholls' fourth-minute centre. The Saddlers had capitalised on Rovers' uncertain start and there was a lingering tension in the air – despite the Pirates introducing new boss Dave Penney before the game.

Rovers were struggling and their long ball tactics played into the hands of the robust Andy Butler and Manny Smith. Rovers hardly threatened – until David Bevan saved at the feet of Will Hoskins.

There was a buzz about the Saddlers. It helped, of course, that Rovers were nothing short of woeful. Time and again they squandered possession.

The poor Pirates were being shown up by their visitors and Grigg saw a header deflected wide before forcing Luke Daniels to palm away a dipping volley as half-time approached.

But if the Saddlers thought they were going to be in for an easy ride after the break they were stunned when Rovers netted twice in a minute.

The first, on 53 minutes, was too simple as Hoskins and Kuffour played a neat one-two and when the latter crossed Hoskins tapped in his 14th goal of the season.

The second was slightly more stylish as Kuffour – who had only been on the pitch eight minutes – calmly picked his spot from 18 yards. With seven minutes left, Lescott bagged his first for Walsall – against the club he left last summer.

A driving run from the left-back saw him exchange passes with Macken before lashing past Daniels.



Bristol Rovers' Will Hoskins is heading for a fall after challenging Walsall's Andy Butler.



Saddlers players have something to celebrate.

WALSALL WOOD

Single goal is ruin for streak

WALSALL WOOD 0 CADBURY A 1

Wood's unbeaten run came to an end with Athletic preventing the home side achieving a league double.

The visitors started the game strongly and a scrambled clearance resulted in centre-half Chris Lewis putting the ball into his own net after only nine minutes.

Home boss Nigel Birch changed formation and Wood created several chances as Nadat hit the crossbar and Purvey headed wide.

Athletic had a chance to double their lead two minutes before half-time from the penalty spot but put the spot-kick wide.

Home keeper Braddock made two excellent saves in the second half and Wood pressed for an equaliser late on but were unable to find the net.

"Everyone can see that the lads cannot be criticised for effort but the simple fact is we do not score enough goals," said Birch.

WILLENHALL TOWN

Reds taste defeat at Bridgnorth's hands

BRIDGNORTH 2 WILLENHALL 1

Willenhall slumped to a Midland Alliance defeat at the hands of Bridgnorth. They had the bonus of a third minute lead when Jason Hurley lost possession to Dean Williams and he fed leading scorer Mitch Fellows who calmly slotted his 13th league goal of the season into the corner.

With the wind behind them and playing down the slope, the visitors would have hoped for a better return than being 2-1 down at the interval.

On 29 minutes Andy Rich evaded the offside trap and was left with a simple finish into the corner past an exposed Liam Flynn before a dubious free-kick right on the break proved profitable when it was taken quickly to Luke Chapman and he fizzed a cracking effort home from 30 yards.

After the break a poor back pass put from Jamie Fisher put Flynn under unnecessary pressure and the keeper scuffed his clearance at Rich, leaving an open goal for the striker. Flynn made one flying save before the hosts grabbed a fourth goal in stoppage time when Chapman picked up a loose ball and crossed towards Anwar Olughbon touched home.

BLOXWICH UT

Blox come out all even

W'TON CASUALS 2 BLOXWICH 2

The home side got off to a good start Mike Hancox heading in a Mark Habbershaw free-kick in the seventh minute.

Bloxwich's Leon Taylor equalised in the 27th minute when he brushed off a challenge before putting the ball beyond the reach of Marc Evans.

Taylor claimed his second goal just before half time when he side-footed in a Karl Edwards cross from the right. Bloxwich went close to getting a third goal when substitute Alan Wilkes slipped the ball past Evans but Luke Tudor was on hand to clear the danger.

Casuals enjoyed an excellent spell and deserved the equaliser that arrived in the 74th minute when Jonathan Aldridge got the finishing touch to a Tom Maydew cross.

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TIME FOR COURAGE IN SURVIVAL FIGHT

WALSALL 2 HUDDERSFIELD 2

FORTUNE favours the brave. Now, Walsall have to muster all their courage for the fight.

At the heart of this Saddlers' side is a new-found spirit but whoever takes charge at Exeter on Saturday must have the bottle to shoulder one hell of a challenge.

The weekend's defeat to Huddersfield, however undesired, merely highlighted Walsall's desperate plight. Managerless, and pointless for another game, they sit seven points from safety at the bottom of League One. An appointment is now pressing as Walsall bid to leave the limbo they occupy.

The Saddlers have bided their time and refused to be rushed but they must make their move soon. It has been 13 days since they finally sacked Chris Hutchings and while the Saddlers dallied on that decision, they cannot afford to be so lax this time.

There is a difference between taking your time and wasting it. Caretaker boss Dean Smith is still a frontrunner because he is the present incumbent but, after Saturday, his position seems less certain.

The head of youth has admitted he "wasn't sure" about going for the job.

Mark Kinsella watched on – although as a frequent visitor one must not jump to conclusions – and would relish the challenge. Paul Trollope is another hotly-linked possibility, but as a man on gardening leave after departing Bristol Rovers last month he has to tread more carefully than others.

Fans can expect to see an announcement before the trip to Exeter. Whoever it may be, they will take charge of a team who have plenty of heart but little luck. Smith remained defiantly positive and he has instilled extra fight into the team – fight that had long since gone under the previous management.

Under him, there is a 'have-a-go-hero' nature, which has been lost, and they deserved more than defeat on Saturday. It has endeared the Saddlers to their supporters and allowed some to reconnect but it has only gained them two points from three games.

And while they continue to undermine themselves it will be a fruitless fight, with no happy ending. Basic errors blight their performances as they toss goals and points away.

Highlighted

Andy Butler's slip for Kevin Kilbane's equaliser and David Bevan's miskick for Jordan Rhodes' injury time fourth highlighted Walsall's fragility. Between the strikes the Saddlers failed to deal with corners from which centre backs Jamie McCombe and Peter Clarke scored.

Poor defending will cost you but naive defending will kill you off. Under Smith Walsall will score goals – you just don't bank on them to keep a clean sheet.

It's not a new problem – they've been shipping goals all season – but in the past three games they have conceded nine. That is a goal every half an hour and no team can do that and survive.

They have kept just three clean sheets this season and their goal difference stands at a wretched minus 22. And the talk of having 22 games to turn the season around seems hollow when you work out they need to win at least 10 and draw one to reach the magic 50 point mark for survival.

Walsall must now hit something regarding play-off form to reach it. Considering they have only won five all season it's a tall order. It's not impossible, but with the way things are going you wouldn't bet on it.

In the last three games they have squandered the lead and failed to win any – despite valiant efforts.

This time Alex Nicholls' early opener was cancelled out by Kilbane's fine finish after Butler's poor pass. It was typical Walsall, start well but blow it, and McCombe's header merely confirmed the fears.

Matt Richards' seventh of the season levelled things and cued a home onslaught, but they couldn't capitalise on. They fell to two late sucker punches – Clarke's overhead kick and Rhodes' late fourth after Bevan's miskick. If the watching managers wanted any evidence of the task ahead, they got it and now Walsall must fight for their lives.



Will Griggs gets away from his marker



Another chance goes begging as Alex Nicholls cannot get to the ball



Manny Smith, during one of the many clashes with the Huddersfield attack



Alex Nicholls celebrates his goal

Smith stays happy but unsure over being boss

Caretaker boss Dean Smith today revealed he remains undecided whether or not to chase the Walsall hot-seat.

The head of youth confirmed he has not applied to succeed Chris Hutchings yet after Saturday's 4-2 defeat to Huddersfield.

Smith has drawn two and lost one of his three games in charge and had previously remained tight-lipped over his future.

"I'm not sure, to be honest," he said, when asked on his aspirations to be manager.

"I will say I'm really enjoying it at the moment. I haven't got too high on the last two comebacks and I won't get too low on the defeat. I've really enjoyed being at the helm.

"My future is with Walsall. I'm the head of youth and I'll take it game by game. I'm the caretaker manager and my job, at the moment, is to get results."

But, despite his future being in limbo, Smith has been given the green light to bring in new players to aid the Saddlers' relegation fight.

"I speak to the chairman regularly and he knows we need to strengthen the squad. We want to stay in League One and it's going to be a battle," Smith added.

Strengthening

"We are looking to bring a couple of players in. We know we need strengthening."

The Saddlers sank back to the bottom of League One on Saturday and sit seven points adrift of 20th-placed Tranmere, who have a game in hand.

Errors from Andy Butler and David Bevan gifted Huddersfield their first and fourth goals and Smith admitted the slips cost the Saddlers the game in the end.

"We didn't get the goal when we were on top and ultimately paid the price," he said.

"We need to score goals if we're going to stay up and you can't win games without scoring – what we've got to do is cut out the mistakes."

"That's the reason why we conceded four goals on Saturday."

"Andy held his hand up for the mistake and Bev held his hand up for the fourth. Instead of putting it back in their half he tried to pick out Darryl Westlake. What cost us was two mistakes and two set-pieces."

"It was an entertaining game but unfortunately we came out with nothing."

League Table																
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts				
Brighton	23	8	4	0	26	9	5	3	3	16	9	46				
Huddersfield	25	8	2	3	22	15	5	1	6	20	20	42				
Southampton	24	7	4	3	23	9	5	1	4	20	11	41				
Bournemouth	24	9	1	2	31	10	2	5	5	14	17	39				
Peterborough	23	8	3	3	32	25	3	2	6	14	21	36				
Mk Dons	24	9	2	1	20	9	2	1	9	12	25	36				
Charlton	23	5	3	3	13	15	4	5	3	26	20	35				
Oldham	23	5	5	2	18	16	4	3	4	16	17	35				
Sheff Wed	23	3	18	9	4	1	6	18	15	34						
Colchester	22	5	6	2	21	20	3	4	2	11	11	34				
Rochdale	23	4	5	2	19	15	4	3	5	15	32					
Brentford	24	4	3	4	12	15	5	2	6	16	15	32				
Hartlepool	22	4	2	4	17	21	5	3	4	9	9	32				
Carlisle	22	6	4	3	22	13	2	3	4	11	11	31				
Exeter	24	5	4	2	22	16	3	3	7	13	26	31				
Notts County	22	7	0	4	17	11	2	3	6	13	30					
Plymouth	25	5	4	5	17	19	3	2	6	14	21	30				
Leyton Orient	22	5	2	2	15	10	2	5	6	17	24	28				
Swindon	24	5	3	5	16	18	2	4	5	20	23	28				
Tranmere	23	4	3	5	15	19	3	2	6	12	18	26				
Yeovil	23	4	2	4	14	16	3	3	7	10	20	26				
Bristol Rovers	23	3	3	4	11	17	2	5	6	16	28	23				
Dag & Red	23	2	4	4	10	14	3	2	8	14	24	21				
WALSALL	24	3	0	8	12	23	2	4	7	14	25	19				

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